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ABSTRACT

This proceedings document provides the texts of 12 presentations given at a 2-day conference in 1992 which focused on policies, materials, programs, and activities being implemented in Alabama to foster the successful transition of youth with disabilities to adult life. Two papers address the national scene: "Transition Services Requirement: Issues, Implications, Challenge" (William D. Halloran) and "Transition: Life-Span and Life-Space Considerations" (Edna Mora Szymanski). The remaining 10 papers address Alabama programs and services: (1) "Mobile's Work Instruction Program" (Ann Hilderbrand); (2) "Marshall County's Transition School" (Danna Reed and Frank Reed); (3) "Alabama's Mental Health-Mental Retardation: A Transagency Model for Transition" (Billy R. Stokes and Vicki Hicks Turnage); (4) "Social Security Work Incentives for Students in Transition" (Trevil Jones and Paul E. Reams); (5) "Functional Curricula for Transition" (Caroline Dunn); (6) "Auburn's Program for College Students with Disabilities" (Kelly Haynes); (7) "Assessment in Transition: A Frame of Reference for Practice" (Philip Browning and Connie Brechin); (8) "Alabama's Rehabilitation Transition Counselors: A Statewide Study" (Philip Browning and Connie Brechin); (9) "Alabama's Secondary Special Education Teachers and Special Education Coordinators: A Statewide Study" (Philip Browning et al.); and (10) "IDEAS and Transition: Questions and Answers" (Mabrey Whetstone). A bibliography contains over 100 references grouped into the following categories: basic information, functional assessment, functional curricula, vocational preparation, community preparation, self-determination, and interagency collaboration. A list of conference participants completes the proceedings. (DB)

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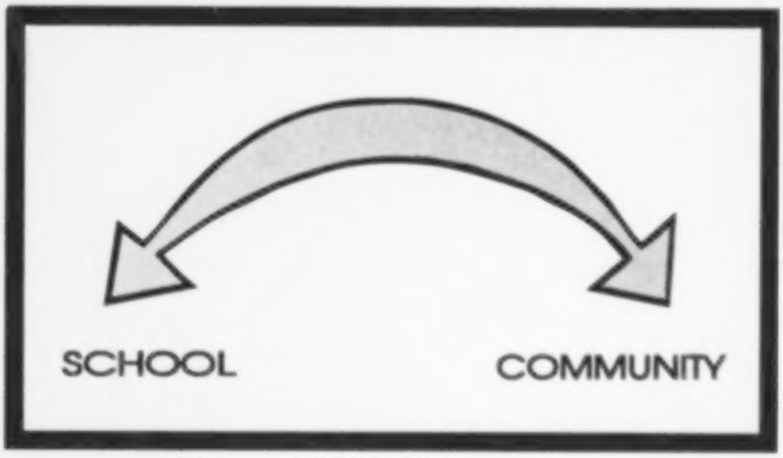
Transition II in Alabama:

A Profile of Commitment



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Editor

State Conference Proceedings
January 1993

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Transition II in Alabama
A Profile of Commitment

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The joint funding for this state-wide conference was made available through Auburn University's Extension Division and the College of Education. The Alabama Division's of Special Education Services, Rehabilitation Services, and Vocational Education Services, and all conference participants extend their appreciation for helping to make this event possible.

Auburn University is an equal opportunity
educational institution and employer

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OTHER CONFERENCE KEYNOTERS

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PREFACE

In May, 1992, we held our second statewide conference on transition. This event was co-sponsored by Auburn University's Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education and the State Division's of Special Education Services, Rehabilitation Services, and Vocational Education, Department of Education. The general purpose of this conference was to increase transition-related activities at the state and local level in terms of generating new ideas and in improving the quality of existing programs, strategies, policies and techniques designed to improve the lives of Alabama's youth with disabilities. More specifically, three of the conference objectives were:

1. to increase the participant's knowledge of transition issues, problems, resources, and programs, especially as they pertain to Alabama;
2. to expand and strengthen the network for all persons interested in Alabama's youth with disabilities; and
3. to publish and distribute the conference proceedings to conference participants, and other interested persons.

The content of our two day program focused primarily on transition policies, materials, programs, and activities currently being implemented in the State of Alabama. Most of the invited presenters were field-based practitioners, as well as local, regional, and state-level coordinators of their respective educational and service delivery programs. In this sense, much of the program "belonged" to those most directly responsible for providing transition services for Alabama's youth with disabilities. Once again, these providers brought with them a wealth of experience and highly useful information. Exemplary programs, demonstrated transition models for practice, curricula materials, and the like were exchanged.

In addition to the program's 18 concurrent sessions, we invited two nationally known leaders in the field to serve as keynote speakers. Dr. William Halloran is the Coordinator of Transition, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education. His paper, **Transition Services Requirement: Issues, Implications, Challenges**, is extremely important in that it sets in motion a potential map for the remainder of the '90s. The critical transition reforms that he addresses are Self-Determination, Secondary Curriculum Reform, Graduation High School Completion (Functional vs. Academic), Anticipated Service Needs (Waiting Lists for Adult Services), and Public Policy Alignment.

Our second national keynote guest was Dr. Edna Szymanski, faculty member, Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Szymanski is one of the more prolific contributors to the transition literature, with her latest pieces being the book: Rusch, F., DeStefano, L., Chadsey-Rusch, J., & Szymanski, E. (Eds.) (1992). *Transition from school to adult life: Models, linkages, and policy*. Scymore, ILL: Sycamore Publishing Company. Her paper, **Transition: Life-Span and Life-Space Considerations for Empowerment**, is also extremely timely for us, for it puts the students and their need for empowerment at the heart of the transition movement.

In keeping with the philosophy underlying our conference, we again had several consumers to serve as our keynoters, as well as conduct one of the concurrent sessions. Mark McClellan, June Jackson, Elouis Woods, Rose Goodman, who are representatives of "People First," spoke of the importance for them to be recognized as people "first." And, of course, in the delivery of this powerful message, they were speaking on behalf of all consumers with disabilities. Everyone present heard them express their right to decision-making, their right to problem-solving, their right to self-determination, and their right to empowerment. We must continue to listen to them.

Now, let me take this opportunity to extend a thanks to all of you who helped to make this conference possible. First, I want to acknowledge the other members of the Conference Planning Committee, who included Cary Boswell, Mabrey Whetstone, Connie Brechin, Jim Kendricks, and Ernest Shubird, who represent Alabama's Division's of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Vocational Education. Second, the conference was possible, in part, because of the joint funding that was made available through Auburn University's Extension Division and the College of Education. This support came from Dr. William Sauser, Associate Vice President for Extension, Dr. Robert Rowsey, Assistant Dean for Extension and Development, and Dr. Richard C. Kunkel, Dean, College of Education. Third, appreciation is extended to the agency administrators who not only endorsed this event but allowed their employees release time to attend. These leaders include Mrs. Lemona Lucas, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Dr. Kenneth Wilson, Director of Special Education Services, Dr. Stephen Franks, Director of Vocational Education, and Dr. Wayne Teague, Superintendent of the Alabama Department of Education.

And lastly, I would like say thanks to the more than 300 conference participants for their enthusiasm and interest in the program. Without question, your active involvement helped to make this a fun and exciting educational event. I very much look forward to all of us (and more) congregating at the third state-wide transition conference to be held April 29-30, 1993. See you then!

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As we begin the 1990s, we witness the legislative changes which have moved transition services from a privilege to an entitlement . . .

The key word is partnership. We as transition professionals must work in a respectful partnership with students with disabilities and their families toward realization of their goals--not ours.

It is unrealistic to expect students to become well-adjusted, active members of their community if they are not afforded opportunities to become active members in decisions that affect their future.

Community based instruction has become recognized as a primary methodology for preparing and assisting individuals with disabilities to make the transition from school to community life.

. . . given the importance of assessment in transition . . . a (assessment) program would help answer the questions of what type of information is to be gathered, who is responsible for gathering it, when and how often it is to be gathered, who is responsible for recording and interpreting how it is to be used, and who will be the users.

Over 75% of the teachers said that they did not instruct their students in either in-school worksites or community worksites.

. . . only half of the counselors reported that their clients participated in "community-based" work experience programs.

. . . 64% of the counselors reported that their clients' vocational success was either "much related" (47%) or "highly related" (17%) to the parents' level of involvement. . .

. . . three essential components are necessary, and for all levels of disability. First is the need for families of youths with disabilities to be included as partners in the development and implementation of purposeful activities that maximize independence. . .

The situation students with learning disabilities (and other disabilities) face upon entering college could be improved significantly in the future with the proper use of a transition plan.

Transition services . . . must include curriculum, community experiences, and the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives.

. . . many students with disabilities may be less ready than students without disabilities to make critical decisions at the end of high school.

Functional assessment in transition [is] the on-going process of obtaining and properly using both person and environment-based assessment information for the purpose of aiding in decision-making . . .

. . . reform efforts at the state and local level will have to be targeted to [the] revision of inter-agency agreements to define financial and service responsibilities among agencies.

Multiple opportunities for in-depth exposure in the workplace, within the community, must be made available to students with mild and moderate disabilities.

Transition to college presents special problems for these students. Many of the LD students have come through the public school systems with little or no accommodations for their disability at the high school level.

More transition-age children will be receiving SSI disability benefits.

. . . a functional curricula is one that is practical, relevant, useful, and usable for an individual student or a group of students. It answers the question, What does the student need to know or be able to do both now and in the future?

The Marshall County School System has established the Transition School, which is an innovative program directed to solving problems students have in making successful transitions from school to work and community life.

The Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MH/MR) is a newcomer to the area of transition.

. . . since 1987, successful closures [transition cases] have more than doubled, with 1,630 such cases successfully rehabilitated in 1991, for over 25% of DRS's successful closures for that year.

. . . rather than using the traditional approach of measuring traits to predict performance, we should assess directly the transition-related competencies that will be taught, and base subsequent instructional decisions on the results of that assessment.

. . . they should systematically develop and approve an assessment program that indicates who needs what type of assessment information and at what stage of the transition process they need it.

This module was developed to help teachers, administrators, agency personnel, and others address and meet the needs of students as they transition . . . in addition to explaining how to complete the IEP, [the module] gives examples of transition goals and objectives, as well as examples of transition statements for IEPs.

The counselors reported that the three most important ways for improving vocational preparation were (a) better and/or more community-based work experience, (b) better and/or more vocational education experience, and (c) better high school vocational curriculum. . .

. . . When asked to select from a set of 11 factors the ones that they considered to be the most important for successful rehabilitation outcome, the three most frequent were: (a) active client involvement in transition, (b) employment opportunities, and (c) "active parent involvement in their children's transition.

As one of three most important ways for improving their special education programs, the [special education] coordinators ranked third from the 10 choices the option of "technical assistance to establish transition agreements with community agencies".

The results of this survey were revealing in that other reasons were given [for not attending the IEP meetings], such as being unaware of the meetings, the scheduling inconvenience, not being asked, as well as not being considered by others to be important to the IEP process.

Transition Services Requirement: Issues, Implications, Challenge [1]

William D. Halloran

The 1970s marked a decade of special education issues characterized by concerns with equal access for all students with disabilities, appropriate education conducted in the least restrictive environment, individualized educational planning, and due process assurances under the law for students and their families. Ten years later, the special education community took stock of its accomplishments since the passage of Public Law 94-142, and could point to progress in these areas, and mark the achievements.

But follow-up studies conducted in the early 1980s (Edgar, Levine, & Maddox, 1986; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; and Mithaug & Horiuchi, 1983) revealed that despite this emphasis on equality, integration, and independence (seen in P.L. 94-142 and other legislation), large numbers of special education students leaving public education were entering segregated, dependent, nonproductive lives. Two thirds of adults with disabilities were not employed, and others were served in segregated programs, or no program at all. Consumers became concerned that school experiences, despite their exemplary quality, would lead to an "aging out" into meager adult services. These findings, along with concern on the part of parents, professionals, and policy makers, gave rise to the issues of the remainder of the 1980s: early intervention, transition from school to work, maximum participation in regular education, family networking, and follow-up/follow-along responsibilities. These issues expanded the role and responsibility of public education to younger and older age groups.

They also emphasized the importance of developing relationships between the school and elements of the community, such as families, employers, adult service agencies, and social services. While in the 1970s, accountability through increased documentation and legal resources was stressed, emphasis shifted toward assessing real life outcomes associated with special education in the 1980s. Education agencies began to identify adult adjustment goals for their students in the areas of postsecondary education, employment, and independent living; to plan educational programs and work experiences to achieve those goals; and to follow-up graduates and school leavers in an effort to gauge the effectiveness of school programming.

> ***As we begin the 1990s we witness the legislative changes which have moved transition services from a privilege to an entitlement . .***

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[1] This keynote paper will appear as a chapter in a book edited by Ronald Eaves and Philip McLaughlin and entitled ***Recent Advances in Special Education***, Boston: Andover Publishers.

Transition: The Federal Initiative

Transition was first introduced in federal legislation in the 1984 Amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act, P.L. 98-199. The Amendments drew specific attention to the need to improve the scope and quality of transition services. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services defined the critical components of transition planning and put new demonstration programs into place throughout the country. These components of transition include:

1. Effective high school programs that prepare students to work and live in the community.

2. A broad range of adult service programs that can meet the various support needs of individuals with disabilities in employment and community settings.

3. Comprehensive and cooperative transition planning between education and community service agencies for the purpose of developing needed services for completers, leavers, and graduates.

Many successful programs adapted these critical components in their conceptualization and development. However, the overriding principle in successful programs was that services are shaped by the needs of the youth being served.

The research and demonstration efforts supported by the Federal discretionary program have stimulated the development of new and unique approaches throughout the country. These programs demonstrated that public education can assist youths with a variety of disabilities and levels of impairments in making the adjustment to adult life in their communities. They set in place interagency cooperation between school and adult programs. They also provided instructional support systems to ensure that an individual with disabilities could succeed in real work settings.

Studies of program effectiveness have shown that three essential components are necessary, and for all levels of disability. First is the need for families of youths with disabilities to be included as partners in the development and implementation of purposeful activities that maximize independence. The family is a major facilitator of transition. Second, transition programs must be community-based, and opportunities to experience and succeed in employment and other aspects of community life must be provided. The third component is the need for working partnerships with employers to ensure that efforts of the schools are consistent with employers' needs. Programs that prepare youths with disabilities for employment should include measurement of employers' and employees' satisfaction. Additional strengths lie in effective and systematic coordination of agencies, organization, and individuals from a broad array of disciplines and professional fields.

The interest in transition and the success of early demonstrations led to the expansion of the Federal discretionary program through the *Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1986*, P.L. 99-475. Public Law 99-457 included more specific language to shape state level transition policy as states were encouraged to develop state level interagency agreements for the provision of transition services and required to report information on the status of students with disabilities exiting secondary education.

. . . three essential components are necessary, and for all levels of disability. First is the need for families of youths with disabilities to be included as partners in the development and implementation of purposeful activities that maximize independence . . .

Although transition-related language and the accompanying discretionary dollars prompted a flurry of research and demonstration activity across the country, federal legislative actions prior to 1990 provided no definition of transition, no mandate for providing transition services, and no mechanism for funding other than through model demonstration projects. Therefore, states and localities were allowed to provide and fund transition services in programs serving secondary-level youth with disabilities at their own discretion. These circumstances resulted in considerable heterogeneity in the extent and manner in which states responded to the federal transition initiative. The heterogeneity existed along a number of dimensions: the type of state level policy; the nature of interagency agreements; the designations of a lead agency in transition planning, the age at which transition services begin; the type of services available; and the manner in which transition planning was conducted (Repetto, White, & Snauwaert, 1990; Snauwaert & DeStefano, 1990).

For some states, lack of federal prescription created opportunities for individualization as they went about constructing state level policy and local service delivery systems that were based on the education, adult service, and employment context of their states. The high level of local control increased ownership and commitment to these systems. Transition service delivery was optimized because of such factors as specific local or State level knowledge of anticipated service needs of students exiting school, available resources, personalities, politics, and reducing barriers to service delivery. As a result, a number of states are currently operating efficient, effective systems of transition service delivery that differ greatly from each other, yet achieve desirable results within their jurisdiction (DeStefano & Wermuth, 1991). In other states, with the absence of a federal mandate, little has been done to create a system of transition service delivery. Both efforts have resulted in a national pattern of transition services in which there exist pockets of excellence and pockets of great need.

The 1990 reauthorization of the Education of the Handicapped Act created the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA now requires that transition services be made available to all students age 16 and older, age 14 or younger if appropriate, with the services being updated on an annual basis. Section 1401 of IDEA defines transition services as:

> **. . . a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education,**

> **adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.** [The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, P.L. 101-476, 20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Section 1401(a)(19)]

This new requirement represents a major policy shift regarding transition from the permissive, "when appropriate" to the prescriptive, required services. The required services include transition curriculum, community experiences, and the development of employment and other independent living objectives. In addition to the mandate, the legislation details the process of service provision in four ways:

1. by providing a definition of transition services;
2. by listing the set of activities that comprise transition services and detailing the basis for determining which activities are appropriate for an individual student;
3. by specifying the process by which a statement of needed transition services is to be included in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP); and
4. by describing the responsibilities of the educational agency to monitor the provision of services.

Clearly, transition planning will soon become an essential component of the educational process. Prior to the passage of P.L. 101-476, some states used P.L. 98-199 and P.L. 99-457 as springboards to foster the development of transition related activities at both the state and local level, while other states did not. However, with the passage of the IDEA, states and local educational agencies are now mandated to provide transition services. Many state and local educational agencies have developed policies that mandate the provision of services similar to those outlined in P.L. 101-476, and have been providing those services for a number of years (Repetto, White, & Snauwaert, 1990; Snauwaert, & DeStefano 1990). For other states and localities, the definition contained in P.L. 101-476 may dramatically change the scope and settings in which secondary-level education is provided to youth with disabilities.

Reforms Necessary to Expand and Improve Services

As we begin the 1990s we witness the legislative changes which have moved transition services from a privilege to an entitlement. Just as the issues of the 1980s reflect an extension or elaboration of those of the previous decade, the issues of the 1990s build upon the central themes of independence, interagency linkages, and curriculum and policy reform based upon maximizing real life outcomes for youth with disabilities. Five issues are identified which may characterize the transition issues for the 1990s: self-determination, secondary curriculum reform, graduation/high school completion, anticipated service needs, and public policy alignment. A review of recent research is presented for each issue along with implications for policy makers and professionals charged with the implementation of the transition requirements of IDEA. These issues should be considered as parents, educators and other professionals interact with their colleagues in developing educational reforms in response to *America 2000* (U.S. Department of Education, 1991) and other initiatives for reforming our educational enterprise.

Self-Determination: The Ultimate Goal of Education

Issues of independence, self-sufficiency, and the capacity to make informed decisions are beginning to emerge in the rehabilitation and education literature as essential attributes for successful community integration of persons with disabilities (Mithaug, Martin, Agran, & Rusch, 1988). Thomas (1982) postulates that cultural attitudes toward persons with disabilities progress through three stages: the first, in which a person with a disability is considered helpless; a second phase in which skilled professionals became involved in "helping" those with disabilities; and a third stage in which persons with disabilities exhibit self-determination and begin to question their roles as passive recipients of help. Despite Thomas' claim that cultural attitudes have progressed through these three stages, there is a lack of evidence supporting the claim that parents, professionals, and other "helpers" have actualized the third phase and developed strategies to ensure that persons with disabilities learn and are provided the opportunity to practice self-determination in their education and other facets of their personal lives.

For persons with disabilities, self-determination means "running risks, challenging rules, and acquiring resources" (Varela, 1986). It also involves "Knowing your basic human rights; taking responsibility for your life; and asking for help because you want or need it" (McGill, 1978). Acquiring these personal characteristics and the information base which enables self-determination may be thought of as a developmental process that begins in early childhood and continues throughout adult life (Ward, 1988). The acquisition of these traits should not be assumed to be a natural occurrence but rather the result of purposeful strategies, properly implemented, to achieve the desired outcome of independence. This notion has some very important implications for special education. In a paper addressing the achievement of educational excellence, Wang (1987) states that "of particular interest is the re-examination of the student's functioning in classroom learning and learner outcomes." Similar sentiments are expressed by Mithaug et. al. (1988) as they indicate that the primary goal of special education and, in fact, all education is to increase student responsibility for managing their own affairs. Actualizing this emphasis would require a major change in the current approach to educating, parenting, or planning for children and youth with disabilities. At present, the student is rarely seen as a participating team member, and in fact is rarely even present during the individualized education planning process.

> Implications: The implied outcome of the transition services requirement of IDEA is to assist youth with disabilities to become well adjusted suitably employed members of their communities. Transition services are based on the students needs, taking into account the students preferences and interests. The public agency responsible for the development of the transition services component of the IEP must include the student to ensure that their needs, preferences, and interests are addressed. Students must be active participants throughout the decision making process afforded through the IEP meeting. It is unrealistic to expect students to become well adjusted active members of their community if

> *It is unrealistic to expect students to become well-adjusted, active members of their community if they are not afforded opportunities to become active members in decisions that affect that future.*

they are not afforded opportunities to become active members in decisions that affect that future. There is an increasing realization within the field, that it is unrealistic to expect satisfactory career development and transition outcomes when intervention is delayed until students reach high school (Clark, et. al. 1991). The ultimate question of what schools want students to know or be able to do when they leave school is critical. It is equally as critical that schools ask what they want their students to know or be able to do when they reach middle school, or junior high school, or high school. Preparing a student for independence or transitioning can never start to early. Reform aimed at a goal of self-determination must consider control for learning and performance, a shared responsibility among teachers, parents, and the student him/herself, with primary control residing with the student.

Secondary Curriculum Reform: Completing Initial Transitions

Will (1984) defined transition as a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the many choices and responsibilities of adult life. She went on to suggest that transition can be conceptualized as an outcome oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences leading to employment. Halpern (1985) expands the notion to include outcomes other than employment such as level of integration and the quality of a person's social and interpersonal network. By all accounts it would seem that a successful transition from school to work and adult life is an important outcome associated with effective schooling and service provision (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982).

Edgar's work (Edgar, 1987) and that of others (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Mithaugh Horiuchi, 1983) indicates that students exiting special education programs often experience significant difficulty making the transition to adult and working life. Recent studies by Mithaug and Horiuchi (1983), Hasazi, Gordon, and Roe (1985); Hasazi, Gordon, Roe, Hull, Finch, and Salembier (1985); Fardig, Algozzine, Schwartz, Hensel, & Westling (1985); Wehman, Kregel, & Seyfarth (1985); Gill (1984); and Edgar, Levine, & Maddox (1986) provide a discouraging picture of the post school adjustment of individuals who have left special education.

> **The truth is that secondary curriculum for special education students appears to have very little, if any, impact on their eventual adjustment to community life. A logical conclusion is that major change in secondary programs for special education is urgently required . . . The only solution is a radical shift in focus of secondary curriculum away from academic to functional vocational, independent living tasks** (Edgar et. al. (1986).

Shill (1988) analyzed 315 Individual Education Plans (IEP's) from high schools in suburban and urban districts in Washington and found that functional objectives occurred in just 31% of the IEP's and only 20 of the objectives specified generalized outcomes. It appears that while we are looking for more positive living and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities less emphasis is being placed on the "functionality" of our current educational efforts.

Special education students need knowledge and skills in the academic subject areas. At the same time they need to be able to apply that knowledge and skills to solve problems once they leave school. In their book entitled *Why Special Education Graduates Fail,* Mithaug et. al. (1988) indicate that in addition to teaching basic academic skills and appropriate classroom behaviors, special education teaches passive responding and dependency--the major post-school problems of special education graduates. As stated in the previous section, students must be encouraged to think critically, solve problems independently, make choices, set their own goals, decide what to do, initiate action, evaluate their work, and adjust accordingly. In addition, special education students must be given the opportunity to apply skills learned in real settings in mainstream classes, in the community, on the job. A logical conclusion is that significant reform is necessary in secondary special education curricula and practice making it community referenced, community based, and geared to real life outcomes expected for all students.

> ***Transition services...must include curriculum, community experiences, and the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives.***

> Implication: The role of education must be expanded to include making initial employment and independent living placements in appropriate community settings, and providing sufficient time to "follow-along" before students exit public school programs to determine whether additional support is necessary and to evaluate program effectiveness. The transition services provisions of IDEA appear to support this expansion. Transition services are to be designed within an outcome-oriented process and must include curriculum, community experiences, and the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives. A logical conclusion is that significant reform is necessary in secondary special education curricula and practice making it community referenced, community based, and geared to real life for students.

Graduation/High School Completion: Functional vs. Academic

The increase in regular education requirements is drastically affecting the flexibility of special education programming for students with mild disabilities. More and more states are setting minimum standards that must be met for any student to graduate from high school. These standards usually include earning a specified number of Carnegie units, passage of a minimum competency test, and certain course and credit requirements. Although there is a well-recognized need for a high school education that results in the development of basic competencies, this concept is in actuality being interpreted as academic competencies rather than life skill competencies.

In some states and localities, students, parents and teachers are forced into a planning dilemma related to graduation requirements. In some cases if students wish to receive a regular diploma, they must focus upon academic requirements, leaving no time for course work in vocational education, career education and experiences that relate to the development of social skills and independent living--all areas of well-documented need for students with disabilities. It appears that not only is curricular reform necessary as stated in the previous section, but accompanying policy change must occur for students to be maximally prepared for adult life.

Exiting data indicates that almost all youth with disabilities who are in regular education programs leave school before age 19. The majority of these individuals do not graduate with a "regular" diploma. Estimates indicate that over 30% might drop out of school prior to the age of graduation (Halloran and Ward, 1988). Recent studies and reports indicate that it cannot be assumed that the earning of a diploma can be equated with being prepared to live and work in our communities. The National Council on Disability (1989) reported that students with disabilities are lagging behind their peers without disabilities. The *Twelfth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act* (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 1990) indicated that 47% of all students with disabilities do not graduate from high school with either a diploma or certificate of completion. This figure is corroborated by data from a National Longitudinal Study (Wagner & Shaver, 1989). Their study indicated that 44% of students with disabilities failed to graduate from high school and 36% of the students with disabilities dropped out of school. Employment data for people with disabilities is similarly discouraging. While the national unemployment rate is about 6%, almost two-thirds of all Americans with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 24 are not working (Harris and Associates, 1986). These studies suggest that many factors contribute to this situation, including: attitudinal, physical, and communication barriers; lack of appropriate training opportunities; and scarcity of effective transition planning and service programs. None of the studies recommended a stronger academic approach for youth with disabilities. However, questions have been raised regarding the academic emphasis at the expense of more functional, community referenced instruction.

> Implications: The transition services requirements of IDEA appear to be calling for an increase in functional programming directed toward improving employment and independent living outcomes. This presents a dilemma for 50% to 70% of the secondary aged youth with disabilities whose educational placements are predominately in regular classes. This group includes the students reported to be served in regular class and resource room environments. The question is: Can it be expected that regular classes or resource rooms have the capacity to meet the new functional requirements in IDEA? Research and information obtained from needs statements for model demonstration grants would indicate that the answer is no. The problem of regular education classes being responsive to the new transition requirements, i.e. functional programming, is further complicated by the view point of many professionals that any form of "separate education" is inherently unequal. However, it is regular education (regular class and resource room) placement that appears to be the education environments that students are rejecting, i.e. they are dropping out.

Programs aimed at continuing to engage or to re-engage such students are needed. Reform is needed to provide for intensive instruction to prepare youth to live and work in their communities and to foster the availability of services in normalized, age appropriate settings such as adult education, postsecondary vocational education, and community colleges which will help to eliminate the stigma of having to return to the same high school. Many state and local education agencies have established policies that consider the acquisition of a high school diploma as a point of termination of eligibility for special education regardless of whether the student is under the state's maximum age for services or has had the opportunity to experience functional programming. The provisions in IDEA would allow educational agencies to issue diplomas and continue enrollment of students if they have not had the opportunity to complete the transition services component of their IEP as long as they are under the states maximum age for services. Reform efforts at the state and local level should review policy related to this issue to ensure that policies will not penalize students from receiving these opportunities.

Anticipated Service Needs: Waiting Lists for Adult Services

Today, educational programming for students with severe disabilities has as its goal to prepare students to live an adult life in integrated community residential and work settings. This goal remains reasonable as long as the necessary support services are available to maintain or enhance the person's maximum level of independence, productivity, and community participation once the responsibility of the educational system is nonexistent or has ended (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982). Unfortunately, needed services are frequently in short supply. The growing discrepancy between the service needs of youth with severe disabilities who leave school along with the capacity of existing adult services to provide for these needs has a grave impact on families and other caregivers who are often shocked to learn that the full service mandate terminates after school years (McDonnell, Wilcox, Boles, & Bellamy, 1985). Deinstitutionalization and the P.L. 94-142 mandate for a free, appropriate public education have led to an implied promise of responsive community-based adult services. This promise has been unfulfilled for many school leavers as they remain on waiting lists for months or years or enter employment and residential settings that are segregated.

Some might argue that the problem of waiting lists or paucity of responsive adult programs and services are not legitimate concerns of the special education community. The fact is that the momentum to integrate students with severe disabilities into the mainstream of society has been increasing rapidly, brought on largely through the efforts of the school. Innovative instructional practices have been developed to prepare youth to work and live in society. Increasing numbers of today's youth with severe disabilities have had the benefit of community-referenced curricula focused on the acquisition of age appropriate functional skills required for success in integrated domestic, community, recreational, leisure, vocational, and educational environments (Brown, Neitupski, & Hamre-Nietupski, 1976; Ward & Halloran, 1989). In addition to providing new technology and a focus to prepare students to be maximally independent, integrated, and productive in society, many school programs are now successful in preparing students with severe disabilities for gainful employment through work experience and supported employment programs (Rusch, Trach, Winking, Tines, & Heal, 1987; Vogelsberg, 1986). Unfortunately, as in the case of most community-based adult services such as recreation and residential programs, there also exists a shortage of supported employment programs for students who are exiting secondary school programs prepared to work (DeStefano, Winking, and Rusch, 1988).

Community-referenced, functional education implies that the concepts and skills learned by students will be applied in community settings. If the end result in public education for persons with severe disabilities is placement into a segregated setting or the experience of a long delay for service where regression or loss of skills is likely to occur, then the entire educational process becomes futile and without meaning.

> ***. . . . reform efforts at the state and local level will have to be targeted to . . . [the] revision of interagency agreements to define financial and service responsibilities among agencies.***

Implications: The problem of waiting lists and lack of appropriate adult services is complex, difficult to solve and goes beyond what education alone can solve. If the 1990s are to be credited with its solution, much needs to be accomplished. A logical first step might be to assess individual service needs during transition planning and to discuss those needs with agencies providing adult services. This will help to identify what is possible as well as gaps in needed services locally, regionally and at the state level.

IDEA states that transition services means a "coordinated set of activities" that promotes movement from school to post school activities. Expansion of Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements call for the public agency responsible for IEP development to include representatives of other public agencies involved in the planning and provision of services. Despite the merits of inclusion of outside agencies in transition planning, assurance of participation of agencies other than education has been difficult to achieve. The gaps in service and responsibility that exists in the articulation between mandated educational services versus eligibility determined systems such as rehabilitation, mental health, and public assistance programs mitigate against effective provision of services. In the absence of a federal mandate for adult services, reform efforts at the state and local level will have to be targeted to the development of needed services as well as revision of interagency agreements to define financial and service responsibilities among agencies. Increased articulation and planning between education agencies and adult service providers has resulted in better coordination of services and a more efficient use of scarce resources leading to improved outcomes for transitioning students. These efforts should continue, be encouraged, and be expanded.

Public Policy Alignment: Supporting Education Efforts

The commitment to integration and the provision of transition services necessitates a reform in our secondary special education programs to ensure that all youth with disabilities have the opportunity to become well adjusted, suitably employed members of their communities. As we become more focused on programming for future environments, the need for reform in current educational policy and procedures will become apparent. The coordinated services provisions of IDEA will also necessitate the alignment of policy and procedures to enable the development of working relationships between education agencies and adult service providers.

In addition to the reforms in practice mentioned above, there is also a need for policy alignment in Federal programs. This would include the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program and aspects of the Fair Labor Standards Act administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Supplemental Security Income Program has often been considered a disincentive to employment and other aspects of independence. Consequently, some well-meaning educators and rehabilitation professionals were reluctant to assist people with severe disabilities and their families to enroll in the SSI program. The notion of promoting a payment program which might act as a disincentive to participation in training and employment programs would be contrary to the commitment to assist individuals in maximizing their potential for self-sufficiency (Halloran, 1991). Several incentives to participate in training and employment have been introduced to the SSI program since 1980. These changes sought to remove some of the economic barriers associated with working and allow for the continuation of benefits until a recipients earnings and employment benefits would ensure coverage. Two major work incentives included in the current SSI program are: the "Plan to Achieve Self Support Program (PASS); and the Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) provisions. These incentives and the Medicaid health insurance program are assets that eligible youth with disabilities should be linked with.

The issue relating to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) has become a barrier to the implementation of community based training programs. The focus of both the FLSA and community based training efforts are for the benefit of the student with disabilities, rather than employers. The intent of the FLSA is to ensure that individuals are not exploited in our nation's workplace. The intent of community based training for students with disabilities is to provide structured educational activities which will lead to employment in their communities. Community based training has been demonstrated to be an extremely effective strategy for improving employment outcomes. However, a number of programs have been forced to reduce their services after being cited for failure to pay commensurate ways to students in a variety of community situations.

> Implications: Educators must become familiar with the benefits and incentives associated with the SSI program. The State Systems for Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities Program created in the IDEA requires participating States to develop procedures to be used to ensure that youth and their families who are potentially eligible for the disability programs of the Social Security Administration are provided information, training, and referral services (U.S. Department of Education, 1991). The benefits and incentives of the SSI program have been used effectively to enable students to continue in paid employment positions after they have completed school. The SSI incentives have been used to continue support services that have been developed by school programs which enable students to secure and maintain employment. Examples of these supports include subsidized transportation under the IRWE provisions and the payment of job coaches and trainers under the PASS provisions.

Community based instruction has become recognized as a primary methodology for preparing and assisting individuals with disabilities to make the transition from school to community life. Community based instruction refers to systematic teaching of "life skills" in the actual environments in which the students need to apply them. These environments include the world of work where curricular content is based on ecological inventories to determine the skills needed in order to be employed. The need to develop systematic instructional strategies to prepare individuals for employment and independent living requires the development of well articulated programs which clearly delineate the student as a trainee rather than an employee. The public education agency must also ensure that at any point in time in which the education program becomes secondary to the performance of productive work, an employment relationship will begin along with commensurate compensation in accordance with the provisions of the FLSA. Public education agencies will have to acquire a working knowledge of the FLSA to ensure that their programs prohibit exploitation and violations of labor laws. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor are currently involved in discussions to provide guidance to education agencies in program development to ensure that student/trainee vs. employee distinctions can be made to satisfy the FLSA requirements. Reforms at the Federal level are expected to be reflected in revision of practice and definition of programs at the state and local level. These reforms should result in well articulated community based vocational education programs which will demonstrate compliance with both the IDEA provisions and those of the FLSA.

> ***Community based instruction has become recognized as a primary methodology for preparing and assisting individuals with disabilities to make the transition from school to community life.***

Summary

Prior to the passage of P.L. 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, transition services were treated as a discretionary program in Federal Legislation. The discretionary program authorized by P.L. 98-199 and strengthened by P.L. 99-457 was intended to stimulate research and the development of demonstration programs to address concerns of Congress regarding the rather poor outcomes of many students exiting special education programs. Halpern (1992) links the transition movement to two similar movements: the career education movement in the 1970s and the work/study movement of the 1960s. Both of these areas of program emphasis were similar to the transition movement prior to IDEA. However, the IDEA provisions represent a major policy shift from permissive to prescriptive, required services. This policy shift differentiates transition services from the movements of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s which encouraged improved services to achieve educational outcomes without a clear statement of entitlement for all youth with disabilities.

This paper identified five issues which may greatly influence the implementation of the transition services entitlement: promoting self-determination among students in special education; curriculum reform resulting in real life outcomes for students; reducing competition between increased graduation requirements and functional education; anticipating and accommodating service needs of students exiting public education; and the need for realignment of public policies to support the transition efforts in education and to maximize the cooperation needed to achieve successful outcomes. These issues and implications should be considered as students, parents, educators, and other professional interact with their fellow citizens and colleagues to ensure that all discussions involving educational reform include measures of excellence relating to positive outcomes achieved by students with disabilities exiting public school programs.

The inclusion of the requirement for transition services is a positive social and legislative move. For the past several years, beginning with the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, there has been a nationwide focus on restructuring and improving our nation's schools. *America 2000* has stimulated broad-based reform efforts to measure the progress of individuals, schools, districts states, and the Nation to ensure that our education enterprize will meet or exceed "world class standards." A major issue in our reform efforts will be to ensure that all students are included in performance standards and that performance standards are realistic for all students. The requirement that transition services be a coordinated set of activities, designed within an outcome oriented process, to promote movement from school to post-school environments establishes the framework for special education reform. Our challenge is to address those issues necessary to ensure effective transition services for students with disabilities while ensuring that reform in our educational system addresses diversity and accommodates the unique needs of all students.

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Transition: Life-Span and Life-Space Considerations for Empowerment

Edna Mora Szymanski

Many leaders in special education and rehabilitation have compared the transition efforts of today with those of past years (see e.g., Danek & McCrone, 1989; Halpern, 1992; Szymanski, 1984; Szymanski, Hanley Maxwell, & Asselin, 1992). Having seen one full cycle of transition interest and having researched previous cycles, I am struck with a gnawing thought that some of the youth of today may be no better off and possibly less well off than their counterparts were 15 years ago. Further, if my suspicions are correct, the transition cycle will continue, and the true spirit of the current supporting special education and rehabilitation legislation (e.g., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] Amendments [1990], the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1986) will not be fully realized. It is my belief that the transient nature of transition interest is due in part to the limited scope with which transition is often approached. The purpose of this paper is to introduce life-span, life-space considerations for transition with a focus on empowerment of individuals, families, and communities. To this end, the following topics are covered: (a) the life-span and life-space context of transition, (b) principles of intervention for empowerment, and (c) concluding considerations for empowerment.

The Life-Span and Life-Space Context of Transition

The current definition of transition services focuses on activities that promote "movement from school to post-school activities" (20 U.S.C. 1401 (a) (19). Both the definition and practice associated with transition place the attention (a) at or near the time when a student completes school, and (b) in the school curriculum. However, transition is not a discrete time in life affecting only the individual and one aspect of their functioning. Rather, transition is a part of career development, which is known to be a lifelong process that begins at birth, relates to all life roles (not just to work) (Super, 1990), and affects the individual, the family, and the community (Szymanski, Turner, & Hershenson, 1992; Turner & Szymanski, 1990).

> ***. . . many students with disabilities may be less ready than students without disabilities to make critical decisions at the end of high-school.***

Unfortunately, the focuses of many transition programs miss the critical life-span as well as life-space elements of transition. Life-span and life-space are terms used in Donald Super's theory of career development (1990). These concepts, albeit under different names, are reflected in many other theories of career development and vocational behavior, including those of Anne Roe, John Krumboltz, and David Hershenson (Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1990; Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992; Osipow, 1983). Although it is known that many of the theories of career development are limited in their direct application to persons with disabilities (Curnow, 1989; Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992; Osipow, 1983), evidence to date suggests that the life-span, life-space considerations are nonetheless applicable and perhaps even more applicable for this population (Osipow, 1976; Super, 1969, 1990; Szymanski, Turner, & Hershenson, 1992).

Life-Span Considerations for Transition

Many theories of career development suggest that individuals' career interests and aspirations evolve over time (Brown, Brooks, & Associates, 1990). Early childhood influences are considered to be critical determinants of later vocational behavior (Szymanski, Turner, & Hershenson, 1992). Although the theories differ in the constructs that they use to explain career development, many of them, nonetheless, support the importance of consideration of the early years and of a longitudinal focus in transition preparation.

Consideration of the early years. Hershenson's theory of work adjustment provides a convenient conceptual framework for considering the career development of people with disabilities and has previously been applied to transition (Hershenson, 1981, 1984; Szymanski, Hershenson, & Power, 1988); Szymanski et al., 1992). The key constructs of this theory are the domains of work adjustment, which are work personality (i.e., self concept as a worker and personal system of work motivation), work competencies (i.e., work habits, physical and mental skills applicable to jobs, and work-related interpersonal skills), and work goals (i.e., an individuals' career objectives at a particular time) (Hershenson, 1981; Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992). Each domain has a primary time of development. Work personality develops during the preschool years, work competencies develop during the school years, and work goals develop during the later school years. However, although each domain has a primary time of development, all three are developing throughout an individual's lifetime. The domains interact with each other and with the individual's environment as they develop (Hershenson, 1981, 1984; Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992; Szymanski et al., 1988).

> ***The key word is partnership. We as transition professionals must work in a respectful partnership with students with disabilities and their families toward realization of their goals - - not ours.***

During the pre-school and primary years, when little attention is being paid to transition, the development of the three domains of work adjustment may be inhibited or stimulated by the actions of parents and professionals. A major danger during this time arises from limited opportunities for interactive play with nondisabled peers. Such play can aid in the development of work personality, work competencies, and work goals (Szymanski, Turner, & Hershenson, 1992). From our own development, we recall that work goals are often "tried on" in play activities. Play activities also provide opportunity for development of critical interpersonal skills, which form the foundation of later work-related communication. Consider, for example the similarities between the behaviors of preschool children playing together in a sandbox and those of faculty engaged in a difficult meeting.

Another difficulty during the early years may arise from lessened responsibilities for home or classroom chores. The additional adult time that may be required to assist a child with a disability in the completion of routine chores may result in the child being excused from such tasks. However, it is these very tasks that often strengthen the foundation of the work personality and the work habits component of work competencies. (Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992; Szymanski, Turner, & Hershenson, 1992).

Throughout the pre-school and later school years the development of work goals can be seriously impeded. Fantasy is a natural part of career development (Super, 1990). Most of us have fantasized about exciting careers, and many of us still cherish our fantasies. Young children regularly engage in career fantasies. The ranges of work goals of children with disabilities may be unrealistically restricted if adults routinely discourage fantasies that are not consistent with the perceived limitations of the disability. Further restriction of career fantasies and related work goal development may occur if children with disabilities don't encounter role models, that is, people with disabilities employed and visible in a variety of careers.

Interest development may also be problematic. Interests are not innate, rather they are the result of learning and experiences (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990). Children with congenital disabilities often have fewer and less diverse career-related experiences and learning opportunities than do their non-disabled peers (Turner & Szymanski, 1 990). Thus, the development of interests may be delayed, and interest testing should be approached with extreme caution.

Clearly, many critical antecedents of transition occur during the early years, before transition or career development are focuses of educational services. In addition to missing the early years, our current focus on transition often seems to overlook the longitudinal nature of the process of career development.

Longitudinal focus. The early approaches to career development (e.g., the early formulation of the trait-factor theory) considered occupational choice as a one-time event (Brown, 1990). Today, however, career development is understood as a lifelong process, which, for most people, involves "getting ready to choose, choosing, and typically continuing to choose from among the many occupations available in our society" (Brown & Brooks, 1984, p. ix). Choices are not etched in stone, and career changes are common.

Interestingly, many of our transition practices seem to run counter to what is known about the process of career development for persons with and without disabilities. For example, transition practices often incorporate an occupational choice perspective rather than a longitudinal career development approach.

Students without disabilities are often not ready to make stable career choices by the time they graduate from high school (Osipow, 1983; Super, 1990). The validity of this statement is often affirmed when we consider our own career development. How many of us are currently in the occupation that we had planned in high school? The potential experiential deficits of students with congenital disabilities may cause developmental delays (Szymanski & Corn, 1989; Turner & Szymanski, 1990) and result in a lack of firm interests and work goals by the end of high school (Szymanski, Turner, & Hershenson, 1992). Thus, many students with disabilities may be less ready than students without disabilities to make critical decisions at the end of high-school.

Based on our current knowledge of career development of persons with disabilities (see e.g., Curnow, 1989; Hershenson & Szymanski, 1992; Szymanski, Turner, & Hershenson, 1992; Turner & Szymanski, 1990), transition services should incorporate a longitudinal, career oriented focus rather than a single-time occupational choice perspective. This focus should include (a) attention by professionals and parents to early experiences as discussed in the previous section and (b) proactive planning for career related experiences in the junior high and high school ears. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, the focus should include a recognition by all parties that the transition component of the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) addresses a point in time on the career development continuum and should expand rather than restrict the range of occupational choices available to a student.

Life-Space Considerations for Transition

> ***Considering that the family is often the individual's most stable, natural support system, it would seem that the nature and diversity of interventions by professionals with the family and interventions by the family with the student must also be addressed.***

Just as transition practices often do not address the life-span aspects of the career development of students with disabilities, the life-space considerations are also often absent or limited. For Super (1990), life-space considerations were reflected in multiple life roles (i.e., child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, and homemaker). The general importance of environment and family have been acknowledged in other theories of career development (e.g., Holland, 1985; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990; Roe & Lunneborg, 1990). Such considerations have also been present in the ecological approach to habilitation and rehabilitation suggested by Szymanski and colleagues (Szymanski, Dunn, & Parker, 1989; Szymanski et al., 1988; Szymanski & Parker, 1989), which included the following dimensions: the person, the environment, the perceptions of the individual and significant others, and the interactions of the individual with others.

These multiple formulations attest to the importance of an approach to transition that goes beyond the individual to address the ecological context of career development and service planning. Although a multitude of life-space concerns could be addressed, the current discussion is focused on family, culture, and community. These areas are related to the ecological dimensions and appear to need immediate attention in the development of transition services.

Family. The family of the student should be a major partner in transition planning (Szymanski et al., 1988). Often, the family as a whole and not just the individual student are affected by the process and outcomes of transition (Ferguson, Ferguson, & Jones, 1988). However, although current legislation encourages family involvement, families are often relegated to being participants in a planning process in which they may have minimal effect. Because, there are no clear mandates for adult services, "if parents rely on the system for answers, they may also become its victims" (Nisbet, Covert, & Schuh, 1992, p. 4-16).

Fortunately, some recent efforts have focused on empowering families to assume active leadership roles. Such efforts include Family Leadership Training, Partners in Policymaking, Personal Futures Planning, and the McGill Action Planning System (Nisbet et al., 1992). The critical element here is that the family is considered a vital partner, if not a major force, in planning. Individual transition professionals can greatly increase their effectiveness by recognizing, respecting, and encouraging families as powerful partners in transition planning.

Culture. In addition to involving families, transition planning must reflect an understanding of the culture of the student and the relationship of that culture to the surrounding cultures. Culture is a system of concepts, beliefs, and principles that affect interpretation of events and behavior (DeVos, 1978; Trueba, 1990). Culture and gender exert potent influences on each of the domains of work adjustment. In the pre-school years, one's work personality is influenced by one's role models, by parental expectations, and by societal treatment of one's culture or gender group. In the school years, the development of work competencies may be limited by a variety of factors including limited opportunities, different expectations of teachers and significant others, and lack of role models (Trueba, 1989). By the time one begins to develop work goals, limited work competencies may impede goal opportunities (Hoyt, 1989).

Culture also affects the acceptability of transition interventions and goals. For example, in some cultural groups, family- and/or group-centered interventions may be more acceptable than individual-centered interventions (Trueba, 1991). Also, in some cultures, the roles of family member, community citizen, and homemaker may be more valued than the role of worker (Martin, 1991). Interactions with surrounding cultures affect educational development, which in turn affects career development. Minority students "from 'dominated^{3} societal groups are ^{3}empowered^{3} or ^{3}disabled^{3} as a direct result of their interactions with educators in school" (Cummins, 1986, p. 21). Assessment has been used to legitimize the failure of minority students (Trueba, 1991). Such legitimizing is evidenced by the overrepresentation of minority students in special education classrooms (Ortiz & Yates, 1984). In other words the diagnosis of disability (especially learning disability or emotional disturbance) that brings minority students into special education may be evidence of the disability of the educational system rather than of the individual.

Transition services, unfortunately, offer another risk of disempowering minority students. Such disempowerment can result from assessment practices, which are not culturally valid, and planning processes or interventions, which do not recognize cultural diversity. The following recommendations are presented to assist transition professionals in empowering rather than disempowering minority students.

1. "Foster intrinsic motivation in students by emphasizing student generated versus counselor- or teacher-transmitted knowledge" (Hawks & Muha, 1991, p. 255).

2. "Incorporate the student's language and culture in educational programs" (Hawks & Muha, 1991, p. 256).

3. "Involve the minority community, especially parents, in the program" (Hawks & Muha, 1991, p. 257).

4. "Advocate for students by viewing problems primarily as a result of the system versus a flaw within the student" (Hawks & Muha, 1991, p. 258).

5. Recognize and respect cultural influences in the career decision process and in the relative value of life roles.

Community. Communities offer the context for transition services. Many authors have called for the importance of assessment of community labor markets and community supports (Hanley-Maxwell, 1986; Hanley-Maxwell & Szymanski, 1992; Renzaglia & Hutchins, 1986; Rusch 1986; Udvari-Solner, Jorgensen, & Courchane, 1992; Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood, & Barcus, 1988). Others have called for involvement of communities in planning educational interventions and noted that this is particularly important for minority communities (Cummins, 1986; Hawks & Muha, 1991). And, fortunately, the strategies mentioned earlier for family empowerment recognize the community context.

However, it is my contention that one of the problems of some previous transition efforts has been a failure for them to become part of communities. In this sense, transition programs must enable people with disabilities to be seen as valued members of the community (Cook, 1991; Jenkins, Patterson, & Szymanski, 1992; Noble & McCarthy, 1988; Nosek, 1988; Racino, 1992; Wright, 1972). In addition, the programs, themselves, must become part of the normal functioning of the community (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989; Hahn, 1989), while not inhibiting natural community supports (Ferguson, Hibbard, Leinen, & Schaff, 1990). To this end, transition programs must address the context of general social concerns (Halpern, 1992) rather than offering quick patches that will eventually fail. Thus, it seems that to become valued and permanent parts of community landscapes, transition programs must (a) be built on a firm belief that people with disabilities are members of the community whose contributions and participation is important and valued, (b) have a broad local base of ownership rather than being just another state or federal level flavor of the month, and (c) be designed to reflect the diversity of local needs and assets.

Clearly, life-span and life-space considerations are critical for effective transition planning. Transition planning must consider more than the point of time surrounding completion of high school and must focus on the student in the context of their life-space rather than solely on the individual. The principles of intervention, presented in the next section, provide guidance to transition professionals for an empowerment approach to broadening transition planning.

Principles of Intervention for Empowerment

Special education and rehabilitation interventions are complex and often pose ethical dilemmas for professionals (Patterson & Curl, 1990). Transition presents some interesting challenges, because of its very nature. The transition planning requirements of IDEA necessarily involve identification of and participation by adult service agencies. Further, if an adult service agency fails to provide agreed upon services, the educational agency is charged with reconvening the IEP team (DeStefano & Wermuth, 1992). This multi-agency involvement in planning and the necessity to assure that agreed upon services are provided can serve as both a blessing and as a curse. As a blessing, these requirements appear to increase the focus on transition in both educational and adult service agencies as well as to decrease the probability that students will fall between the service delivery cracks. As a curse, the requirements threaten to decrease family and individual student control over the transition process. Professionals can easily and unintentionally disempower students and families through the nature and the content of their interventions and interactions.

The principles of intervention presented in this section have been used by the author in preservice education of special education teachers and rehabilitation counselors and have been applied to supported employment (Parker, Szymanski, & Hanley-Maxwell, 1989; Szymanski & Parker, 1989) and school to work transition (Hanley-Maxwell & Szymanski, 1992; Szymanski, Turner, & Hershenson, 1992). The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the importance of application of these principles to transition planning.

1. Interventions should be designed to be maximally under the control of the individual, rather than others (Szymanski & Parker, 1989, p. 68). The first principle of intervention is of the utmost importance in transition. With the involvement of multiple professionals and agencies in transition it is quite possible for students and parents to become victims of the transition planning process (Nisbet et al., 1992). Under such circumstances, transition is "done to people" rather than a process to support and empower individual and family choices. It is important to remember that the student and the family rather than the professional will experience most of the consequences of transition interventions. Thus, it is imperative for professionals to work to empower students and families so that they may take responsible control of the transition process.

2. Interventions should be designed to facilitate individual independence and autonomy (Szymanski & Parker, 1989, p. 68). The second principle is vital, especially in light of life-span, life-space considerations. The nature of instruction and the diversity of interventions impact on generalization and maintenance of what is learned (Horner, Dunlap, & Koegel, 1988) as well as on the individuals' approach to future challenges (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990; Tarver, 1992). Considering that the family is often the individual's most stable, natural support system, it would seem that the nature and diversity of interventions by professionals with the family and interventions by the family with the student must also be addressed. Unfortunately, there is nothing in transition policy that mandates instruction for independence or fading of assistance once independent functioning is reached. This deficit in policy is compounded by the financial incentives under which adult service agencies are paid for supported employment. The current system does not reward fading of support as independence is reached, rather it appears to reward continued demonstration of client dependence (Hanley-Maxwell, Szymanski, Parent, & Schriner, 1990),

3. The least intrusive means that are still effective should be used (Szymanski & Parker, 1989, p. 68). The third principle of intervention refers to the extent that interventions are perceived as intrusive by the individual, the family, or by significant others in the student's environment. The utility of interventions must be weighed against the extent to which those interventions might impede family or community support, intrude on social networks, isolate the individual, or otherwise convey a message of non-competence. Natural supports, which have recently received attention in the supported employment literature (Hagner, Rogan, & Murphy, 1992; Nisbet & Hagner, 1988) must be individually determined on the basis of an ecological assessment (Parker et al., 1989). Inappropriately planned interventions can inhibit naturally occurring supports and isolate the individual from social contacts.

4. The most natural interventions for the particular work environment should be used (Szymanski & Parker, 1989, p. 68). The fourth principle is intertwined with the third. It refers to the extent to which interventions are perceived as natural in the individual's environment of choice. For example, in certain work places, a clipboard is natural, whereas, in others a clipboard may signify deviance. Any intervention, which calls inappropriate or negative attention to the individual, should be seriously examined. Critical questions are: "Who benefits from the intervention in this form? Is there any other way to deliver this intervention in order to decrease negative attention called to the individuals?" Such questions must remain paramount if transition professionals are to empower rather than control the lives of consumers.

The ultimate goal of all transition interventions should be the empowerment of students, families, and communities. Necessary products of this goal are increased student and family control and decreased professional control of transition services. The principles of intervention offer convenient benchmarks against which professionals can measure transition planning.

Concluding Considerations for Empowerment

The topics presented in this paper highlight the broad perspective from which transition services must be approached. For the student, transition must be considered as part of life-long career development within the student's current and future life-space. For professionals, transition must be considered as a rallying point for empowerment of students, families, and communities with the goal of self-determination and autonomy.

In addition to the perspective of the student and that of the professional, we must also consider the broader social context of transition (Halpern, 1992). As one part of our understanding of this broader context, we, as professionals must rethink our relationship with the people with disabilities who we serve. In so doing, we are likely to discover the roles that legislation and well meaning professionals have played and continue to play in sanctioning the failure and segregation of people with disabilities (Amado, 1988; Cook, 1991; Gove, 1976) and other devalued minority groups (Trueba, 1 991). At this point, transition professionals must ask themselves whether they want to engage in socially sanctioned oppression or in liberation and empowerment of people with disabilities.

It has been suggested that rehabilitation counselors must work in partnership with people with disabilities toward their full participation in all aspects of society, especially work (Szymanski, 1985). It seems that, although this suggestion has yet to be fully embraced by some rehabilitation counselors, it is nonetheless valid for all transition professionals, including special educators. The key word is partnership. We as transition professionals must work in a respectful partnership with students with disabilities and their families toward realization of their goals -- not ours. Such a partnership requires professionals to affirm and actively support the rights of people with disabilities to self-determination and equal participation in all aspects of society. Grounded in that affirmation is an even more difficult challenge for professionals. We must relinquish our perceived control and affirm the rights of students and families to control the transition process, thus acknowledging our role as supports to students and families rather than as gate-keepers and decision-makers.

In summary, transition is about societal empowerment. Our communities and our society will be enriched and empowered when all citizens, including those with disabilities, are valued and seen as contributing members. Our challenge, as transition professionals, is to facilitate that empowerment through interventions that empower individuals and their families and through our actions as community catalysts who work.

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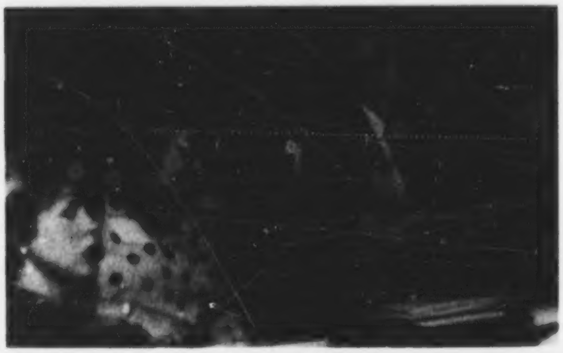

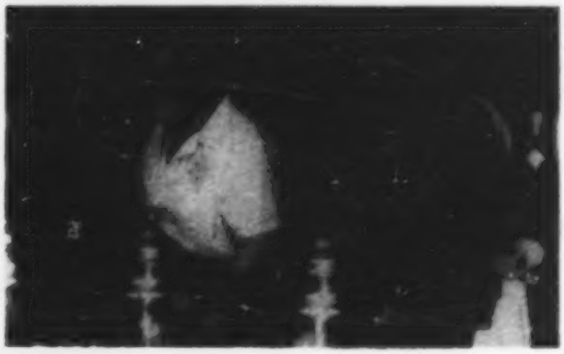

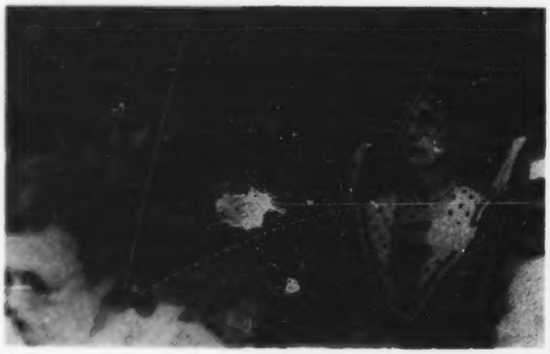

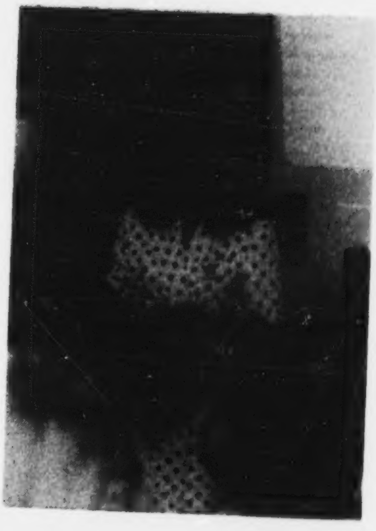

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Mobile's Work Instruction Program

Ann Hilderbrand

Education can do much to prevent dependency and promote full community participation of students with disabilities when systematic attention is given to the transition process of youth from school to work and adult life. Multiple opportunities for in-depth exposure and training in the workplace, within the community, must be made available to students with mild and moderate disabilities. These students need an opportunity, before graduation, to focus on developing skills for employment and have hands on training, if they are to make a positive transition into the adult world of work.

Our Mobile Transition Program is based on three premises. First, we believe that the success in providing transition services will depend on the IEP process and on close cooperation between the school, vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, other support agencies, the parents, and the student. Second, we recognize that a functional curriculum will enable students to be taught skills they need in order to live and work independently in their community. And third, we believe that work instruction will provide students with a "bridge" between the classroom environment and the larger workplace environment they will enter upon leaving school. The purpose of this paper is to briefly introduce the reader to our program.

> ***. . . we believe that work instruction will provide students with a "bridge" between the classroom environment and the larger workplace environment they will enter upon leaving school.***

Objectives for the Work Instruction Program

1. To establish a local transition advisory committee involving the schools, support agencies, business community, students and parents.

2. To designate a special education teacher in each high school to act as the facilitator for the transition process. This teacher will be given two consecutive periods for this purpose.

3. To develop a functional curriculum framework that will provide students with skills to assist them in living and working in their community.

4. To develop a work instruction program for assessment of students' work readiness skills.

5. To develop a community based work instruction program for assessment of students' work readiness skills.

6. To expose students to the community and work expectations.

7. To expose future employers and co-workers to the potential of students with disabilities as reliable employees.

8. To encourage collaboration between vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, and special education to increase options and delivery of services for students.

9. To evaluate yearly, the effectiveness of functional curriculum, work instruction, and community-based work instruction, as part of the transition process.

GUIDELINES FOR THE WORK INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The continuum of our Work Instruction Program consists of four levels.

Level 1: WORK INSTRUCTION

School-aased work instruction (on campus and extended on campus training) students in Level 1, usually sophomores, will receive training in a minimum of two (2) work instruction settings, either on-campus or extended on-campus. The guidelines for this level include:

a. The unpaid work instruction will be for credit and will continue until the student has met specific competencies as required by the facilitator.

b. The work instruction will not take more than two (2) periods from the school day.

c. The on-campus and extended on-campus work instruction will be located within the school district and supervised by school district personnel.

Level 2: COMMUNITY-BASED WORK INSTRUCTION

Students in level 2, usually juniors, will receive training in a minimum of two (2) community based work instruction sites. The guidelines for this level include:

a. The unpaid community based work instruction will be for credit and will continue until the student has met specific competencies as required by the supervising teacher.

b. The training experience will not take more than three (3) periods from the school day.

c. The community based work instruction settings will be located within the county and be supervised by school personnel.

d. All fair labor laws standards must be followed.

Level 3: PART-TIME PAID EMPLOYMENT

Students in Level 3, usually seniors, may work in a full-time paid job. The guidelines for this level include: :

a. The part-time paid job will be for credit and wages.

b. The part-time job will not take more than three (3) periods from the school day.

c. The part-time job must be held at a time that will allow three academic functional credits to be earned exclusive of the work instruction credits.

d. The part-time paid job settings will be located within the county. If the job is the result of an agency placement program, the student will be supervised by the community agency personnel. If the job is the result of a school placement program, the student will be supervised by school personnel.

Level 4: FULL-TIME PAID EMPLOYMENT

Students in Level 4, seniors, may work in a full-time paid job. The guidelines for this level include:

a. The full-time paid job will be for credit and wages.

b. The full-time paid job may take all the periods of the school day. Work hours put in beyond the normal school day will not count as work instruction credits.

c. The IEP must reflect that the student is working for a certificate.

d. The full-time paid job settings will be located within the county. If the job is the result of an agency placement program, the student will be supervised by the community agency personnel. If the job is the result of school placement program, the student will be supervised by school personnel.

e. The student will be required to report to school at least once a week when higher off day or holidays is a school day. This will provide the facilitator an opportunity to discuss job progress and keep the student informed about school activities in which he/she may want the participate.

THE PROCESS

1. Students are tracked into the Work Instruction Program by the end of the ninth grade. This decision is made by the IEP committee and appropriate forms signed by the parent/guardians, student and committee members.

2. The facilitator must be present at the IEP meeting in which the transition goal is determined.

3. A student may enter at any level at any time as determined by the IEP committee.

4. The students' programs are reviewed every year through an annual review to determine if the Work Instruction Program continues to meet the individual needs of the students.

5. Credit for work instruction participation is granted on the following basis: 140 hours = 1 credit and 7O hours = 1/2 credit.

6. The facilitator helps coordinate with teachers the assignment of the students to classes if the student is terminated or laid off from a job after the school year begins.

Marshall County's Transition School

Danna Reed and Frank Reed

The Marshall County School System has established the Transition School, which is an innovative program directed to solving problems students have in making successful transitions from school to work and community life. The Transition School began operation with the start of the 1991-92 school year. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of our Transition School.

The Transition School

The School, which is located on the campus of Marshall Technical School, has a staff of five teachers, a special populations coordinator, and an aide. The goal of the School, which is both student and work oriented, is to meet the needs of local students in making the adjustment from school to employment and community life.

Students

Referral. Students come to the Transition School on a referral basis. They may be referred by their principal, counselor, teacher, or community agency. To qualify, students must be sixteen years old and have no recent record of chronic disciplinary problems.

Upon referral, an initial interview is set up with the student, the student's parent(s), the Special Populations Coordinator, and other appropriate school personnel. Based upon the conference, it is determined if the services offered by the Transition School can benefit the student. The student is then enrolled in the School after a positive determination. We have been able to assist or help in some way almost one hundred percent of our referrals.

> ***The Marshall County School System has established the Transition School, which is an innovative program directed to solving problems students have in making successful transitions from school to work and community life.***

IEP Meetings. The Special Populations Coordinator attends IEP meetings for Marshall County students age 15 and above. At these meetings, it is determined how the School can best serve a special education student. Individual transition goals are established for those that are to enroll in our program. After enrollment, students enter into one or more of the four main service areas offered by the Transition School.

Services

The School's service areas are: (a) Community Based Training, (b) Community Life Skills, (c) Transition COOP, and (d) Academics and Remediation.

- Community Training: Training conducted at a community site provides students with an unpaid work experience while teaching them basic work behavior in a natural work setting. Both the job coach (a teacher) and students engage in pre-training activities before actual community-based training begins. The teacher visits the training site. There he/she becomes familiar with the various tasks that students will be trained to do. A video tape of these tasks is made with each task broken into individual sequential steps. Using what he/she has learned plus the video, the job coach then prepares the students to begin their training. This allows students to be more at ease as they begin their on-site job training.

  Students are transported to the training sites in the school's van by the job coach. The teachers and one aide have completed the necessary requirements and have their Commercial Drivers License (CDL). At the training site, students are assigned work stations or specific duties.

  The job coach keeps a daily record of each student's job performance. Once a student has demonstrated an acceptable job performance level, he/she is re-assigned to another work station at the same training site. When mastery of all jobs that students are to be trained for is accomplished, students are then transferred to a different training site; or a student may be hired for "paid" employment as a result of training.

- Community Life Skills: Students in the Community Based Training Program do not report to a training site each day. When not at a training site, they spend much of their time working on community life skills. They receive instruction in setting, cooking, shop safety, basic shop skills, pre-employment skills, social interactions, and money management. Employability skills will be of a general nature that would transfer to any work situation.

  Students also spend time working on arts and crafts projects. The money made from these items goes to our School Store. Our students have had many money-making projects the first semester. They have made drapes, napkins, and table cloths for the local Holiday Inn and altered high school basketball uniforms. As of March 6, 1992, money received from their projects totaled over $1,588. The money is put back into our program to buy supplies and materials. Students are allowed to use such supplies and materials to make individual projects which they carry home.

- Transition COOP: A large number of our students are enrolled in the Transition COOP phase of our school, which affords them significant advantages. For example, it allows students, who have a need, to work part of the school day while receiving both a salary and vocational credits for graduation requirements. A typical transition COOP student goes to his/her home school half a day and works twenty to thirty hours per week.

Work performance is monitored closely. Our special populations coordinator performs-on-the-job checks and makes frequent phone calls to employers. We also ask each COOP student's immediate supervisor to score student to work ethic and job performance from a checklist provided by the Transition School. This evaluation weighs heavily in determining a student's grade.

The Transition School keeps records of employment which include places and dates of employment as to the overall job performance. This information is available to our students as they seek other employment before or after graduation. On days that they are not scheduled to work, many of our COOP students attend shop classes at Marshall Technical School. In such cases, a student's work grade is averaged with his/her shop work to determine a final grade. All fair labor standards and procedures are followed in the Transition COOP Program.

- Academics and Remediation: Many of the students at the Transition School are at-risk students, former drop-outs, or students with atypical scheduling difficulties. Therefore, it was decided that academic and remediation classes were essential in serving the needs of our students. Take John Doe for instance. The traditional schedule for vocational students allows them to receive three academic credits at their home school while earning three vocational credits at the area vocational school. This may present a student from attending the Transition School or area vocational school because he/she must remain at the home school in order to meet academic requirements. We solve this problem by reducing John's time in the vocational area to two periods. This gives John two vocational credits and allows him to enroll in an academic class at the Transition School.

  Additional scheduling problems for some students occur because they attend small rural schools. Some courses may be offered only once or twice during the school day. Because of the students' work schedules or need to attend vocational classes, they may not be able to schedule some required courses. Most of the time we can help by scheduling such courses at the Transition School.

  Remediation is also offered to students that are having academic difficulties at their home school and to those who need to improve basic language, reading, and math skills in order to pass the Alabama High School Graduation Examination (AHSGE). The Transition School also serves Marshall Technical School students who need academic or remediation classes.

Scheduling

Classroom and community activities are integrated so that the students can develop social and occupational skills needed for success as adults. One problem that we must therefore address is scheduling. For example, we have a senior who comes to the Transition School at 7:15 am, takes two required courses and then works a full eight hours. We have other students who take one or two courses at area high schools, take two courses at the Transition School, and then to work four to six hours per day. We also have situations where two students share the same job. One works mornings and goes to school in the afternoon. The other one works afternoons and goes to school in the morning. They are transported to school and to work by a school bus.

Other features

Transition Team and Cooperating Agencies. The transition team, which meets once a month, consist of all staff members at the Transition School, the Vocational Director for Marshall County Schools, and the vocational rehabilitation counselor for our area. Discussions center around how they may best serve individual and group needs of our students.

Vocational Rehabilitation plays a very important role in our overall transition services. Vocational Rehabilitation compliments transition services for clients who are job-ready. Vocational Rehabilitation can provide current academic and vocational screening for students. This agency can help with reimbursement for on-the-job training and take credits.

Student Awards: To build self-esteem and to recognize students' accomplishments, the Transition School holds an awards day at the end of each grading period. Awards are given for the most improved in academic and remedial classes, completion of training, employment as a result of training, or other achievements worthy of recognition.

Newsletter: The Transition School publishes a monthly newsletter. The newsletter gives further recognition to students by publicizing awards received during presentation ceremonies. Our newsletters also detail on-going activities at the Transition School. Newsletters are distributed to students, parents, feeder schools, community employers, and other interested parties.

Summary

In summary, one can clearly see the Transition School has and uses a great deal of flexibility in attempting to meet student needs. Other than the four basic service areas I have described, we engage in many other activities to prod, push, lead, stimulate, motivate, and encourage our students to work toward assuming the responsibilities that come with adulthood.

In conclusion, we believe that the Transition School's success is due to the following factors: (a) need for transition services, (b) funding and support of the Marshall County Board of Education, our Superintendent, and the Vocational Director, (c) cooperation by principals, counselors, and teachers, (d) involvement of parents, employers, and community, (e) assistance from agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, the Health Department, Employment Service, and others, and (f) faculty and staff who are advocates for vocational programs for students with vocational aspirations.

Alabama's Mental Health-Mental Retardation: A Transagency Model for Transition

Billy R. Stokes and Vicki Hicks Turnage

The Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Division of Mental Retardation (MH/MR) is a newcomer to the area of transition. The MH/MR Department has traditionally not received requests for services for adolescents with mental retardation until they reach adulthood and are seeking entry into our day and residential services. And, in situations where the department has become involved with adolescents, it has been in crisis situations when the parents and/or school officials are experiencing difficulty meeting the needs of the individual. In both of these situations, the individuals are usually placed on a waiting list for services. Consequently these individuals are forced to sit at home and do nothing. This often results in the loss of skills, social isolation, depression, and tremendous stress on the family system.

The Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Division of Mental Retardation (MH/MR) is a newcomer to the area of transition.

As a result of DMH-MRs recognition of the above issues, and the desire to take a proactive approach to planning for individuals in transition, a grant proposal was submitted to the Alabama Developmental Disabilities Planning Council to develop a "transagency" model for transitioning adolescents into adulthood. The council awarded this grant to Region II Community Services to develop this project in the Tuscaloosa area. The purpose of this paper is to outline for the reader this model.

Transagency Model

Goals

The goals for the project are as follows:

Goal I	Development of a system for the selection and establishment of natural work place supports.
Goal II	Development of an enhanced individualized transition planning process.
Goal III	Empowerment of families and self advocates to achieve community employment with natural supports.
Goal IV	Training and implementing employment with natural supports.

Goal V	**Facilitation of employee's involvement in the development of natural work place supports.**
Goal VII	**Coordination of services and community resources.**
Goal VIII	**Development of model and disseminate project outcomes.**

Model Components

The transagency model is designed so that it can be replicated in both urban and rural locations in the state. The model includes the following components:

1. Self-determination/self advocacy training
2. Personal Futures Planning
3. Interagency Transition Council
4. Paid work experiences
5. Parent Training
6. Transagency case management/transition teams
7. Employer Advisory Council
8. People First Chapter Involvement
9. Post-secondary agency involvement
10. Development of Job Bank
11. Use of Natural Support systems
12. Identification of agency resources available for transition

Target Population

The target population for this project is students ages 13-21 with mild to moderate handicaps who attend Tuscaloosa City and County Schools. At present, there are 80 students in this group. This group is divided into three subgroups with each receiving different levels of interventions based on their ages.

Outcomes/Evaluation measures for project

The following outcomes measures are utilized as success indicators for the project:

1. Progress toward strategies
2. Number of placements in competitive employment with natural supports
3. Number of placements in competitive employment with a combination of formal/natural supports
4. Number of placements in supported employment
5. Employer involvement on Advisory Council
6. Employer Satisfaction Survey
7. Number of referrals to existing day programs from target population
8. Student Satisfaction Survey
9. Parents Satisfaction Survey

Agency Roles

An Interagency Transition Task Force is utilized to identify the roles of the major agencies involved in the project. The Task Force is composed of representatives from the following groups: parents, students, People First, Education, RCSII-DMH-MR, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Tuscaloosa Association for Retarded Citizens, Social Security Administration. This task force forms the basis for building the Interagency Council. Agency and supporting organizational roles identified are:

- **Special Education**

  1. Identification of project participants
  2. Completion of referral process
  3. Provision of pre-vocational-job training
  4. Assists with self-determination Training
  5. Assists through JTPA Transition project to develop Job Bank
  6. Serves on the transition team
  7. Provides support to Junior People First Groups

- **Vocational Education**

  1. Provides work training opportunities
  2. Conducts vocational assessments
  3. Assists with self determination training
  4. Supports Job Bank development

- **Vocational Rehabilitation**

  1. Employment development
  2. Develops Employer Advisory Committee
  3. Utilizes committee to develop natural supports in work place
  4. Coordinates job bank information
  5. Educates employers as to tax benefits and ADA
  6. Secures medical, educational, and vocational histories
  7. Arranges for medical and psychological examinations and treatment
  8. Conducts individual and/or group counseling on problems related to rehabilitation
  9. Interprets the needs for specialized services on an individual basis
  10. Assists client in their efforts to secure employment

- **Region II DMH-MR**

  1. Provides Case management for project participants
  2. Develops Personal Futures Plan and provides training to other agency staff in its use in transition planning
  3. Provides training in self advocacy curriculum
  4. Assists in the development of Junior People First Groups
  5. Develops and Coordinates Transition Council

6. Replicates project in Walker County
7. Conducts evaluation of project
8. Conducts parent education support groups

- **Tuscaloosa Association for Retarded Citizens**

  1. Provides input into Job Bank
  2. Provides site for People First Meetings
  3. Assists in supporting paid job experiences for participants
  4. Provides support services as needed

- **People First of Tuscaloosa**

  1. Develops Junior People First Chapters
  2. Assists in the provision of Self Advocacy Training
  3. Participates on Interagency Council

- **Social Security**

  1. Provides information on benefits/work incentive programs/PASS.

Social Security Work Incentives for Students in Transition

Treuil "T. M." Jones and Paul E. Reams

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI), an entitlement program, is a result of the federalization of the individual state welfare programs (Aid to the Totally and Permanently Disabled [ATPD], Aid of the Blind, and Aid to the Aged). The law was enacted in 1972 and implemented in 1974. SSI provides cash payments based on income. For 1992, the maximum a single individual can receive is $422.00 per month. With a cash payment, the disabled individual receives access to health care through Medicaid.

more transition-age children will be receiving SSI disability benefits.

SSI places limits on resources. A single individual may have the following:

Up to $2000.00 in countable assets.
Up to $1500.00 in cash value insurance or cash for burial.
Home and contiguous property.
One Automobile.

For dependent children (up to 18 years of age), parental income is counted. The resource limits for a family are calculated for each additional child. For a couple with one child, the parents may have the following:

Up to $3000.00 in countable assets.
Up to $1500.00 in cash value insurance or cash for burial.
Home and contiguous property.
One Automobile.

A mandatory one-third (1/3) reduction in the maximum payment amount of $422.00 is taken for dependent children. The Disabled SSI child is considered an adult at age 18. SSI cash benefits may rise accordingly.

For income calculation, the Social Security Administration makes a distinction between earned and unearned income. Earned income are payments to the individual directly resulting from the individual's activity, i.e., work. Unearned income are benefits that accrue to the individual from other sources such s a trust fund, private disability insurance payments, VA cash benefits, SSA Dependent or Survivors payments, etc.

> SSA will exclude the first $20.00 of unearned income. Each $1.00 in remaining unearned income results in a $1.00 reduction in benefits.
>
> SSA will exclude the first $65.00 of earned income. Each $2.00 in remaining earned income results in a $1.00 reduction in benefits.

If there is no unearned income, the $20.00 exclusion may be applied to earned income. The earned income exclusion is not transferable.

Expected Increases in the SSI Recipient Population

In 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered a decision in the case Zebley v. Sullivan. The decision held that the SSA's former rules for determining disability in children were inconsistent with the statutory definition of disability. This decision resulted in new disability listings for children filing for SSI Disability. (SSA Office of Disability; Pub. No. 64-040 (No. 4): 01-25-92).

In addition to developing new childhood listings, the decision resulted in SSA having to contact over 400,000 cases that were denied during the years 1980 through 1990. In July 1991, letters were mailed to over 452,000 Zebley class members notifying them of the right to have their cases reviewed under the new rules.

Additionally, SSA has begun an intensive outreach program to ensure that those possibly eligible for SSI have the information necessary to make application. School districts, social service organizations, housing authorities, etc., have been contacted to spread the word.

The results are obvious; more transition-age children will be receiving SSI disability benefits. The amount of the payments will vary with each individual child. However, in some families, the SSI check will be a major source of income. There will be new questions regarding going to work. These questions will revolve around benefit retention. What will happen if I go to work and it doesn't work out? What will happen to my check? What about my health care benefits How much can I earn from work and still get my check?

SSI Work Incentives

SSA has developed a series of Work Incentives in an attempt to address these questions. Each of the work incentives assumes the individual has not medically improved. Also, the individual must meet all income and resource tests remaining technically eligible.

Medicaid Retention

1619(A)

As long as an individual receives at least one dollar in an SSI check, Medicaid will continue.

1619(B)

Under this incentive a disabled individual may qualify for continued Medicaid coverage after income earned is too much for cash benefits. The disabled individual must:

1. Need Medicaid to work.
2. Have gross income that does not offset the loss SSI, Medicaid, the publicly-funded attendant care. This is the Threshold Amount. Currently, the threshold amount for Alabama is $13,235.00.

Impairment-related Work Expenses

This work incentive allows an SSI recipient to exclude from earnings certain cost incurred in going to work. The costs must meet the following requirements.

1. Paid for by the disabled individual.
2. Necessitated by disability and needed for work.
3. Certain expenses are deductible even if the items are needed for non-work activities. For example, medication is needed by the client whether working or not.

Clients should keep receipts as the cost must be documented. The disabled individual will be required to report the costs to SSA at regular intervals.

Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)

The PASS allows a person with a disability to set aside income and/or resources for a specified period of time for a vocational goal. The plan can help a person establish or maintain SSI eligibility and can also increase the person's payment amount. (SSA Pub. No. 63-030).

The PASS Plan must:

1. Be written.
2. Have a feasible vocational goal.
3. Be specific in:
   Where the income/resources is to be set aside.
   How income/resource is to be used.
   Separating PASS income/resource from all other.
   Having specific time frame for achieving objectives
4. Have Social Security Administration approval.
5. Reviewed periodically. As with Impairment-Related Work Expenses, the disabled recipients must present receipts for expenditures from PASS Plans.

Functional Curricula for Transition

Caroline Dunn

The adult outcomes and drop-out data on individuals with disabilities reflects unemployment and/or underemployment, high drop-out rates, low pay, frequent job changes, and low engagement with the community. Unfortunately, what this suggests is that transition efforts, as they have been implemented to date, are relatively ineffective. One of the most critical elements in the transition process is the curriculum implemented during the school years (Cronin, Patton, and Polloway, 1992; Edgar, 1988; Halpern, 1991; Hanley-Maxwell & Szymanski, 1992). Unfortunately, much of the emphasis on improving transition has neglected this foundation. The purpose of this paper is to briefly address the issue of functional curricula for transition. In addition, a number of functional curricula are described.

> ***. . . a functional curricula is one that is practical, relevant, useful, and usable for an individual student or a group of students. It answers the question, "What does the student need to know or be able to do both now and in the future?"***

Secondary Curricular Focus

The curricular emphasis of many secondary programs has been criticized by several leaders in the field. For example, in a discussion of the current needs and concerns regarding transition efforts, Halpern (1992) conveyed that there is a deficiency in what is taught at the secondary level; he suggested that too much emphasis is placed on remedial academics and not enough is placed on functional skills. Brolin (1992) concurred, explaining that most schools continue to emphasize academic skills development at the expense of training in the affective, social, vocational, and daily living domains.

Several studies have examined the issue of curricular orientation at the secondary level. Halpern and Benz (1987) examined secondary special education practices for students with mild disabilities, focusing on curricular implications. They surveyed teachers, administrators, and parents. Sixty-five percent of the teachers indicated that a more appropriate curricula was needed in order to improve classroom instruction.

Halpern and Benz's (1987) study was replicated in Alabama (Browning, Brown & Dunn, 1992). With respect to one of the items, teachers and special education coordinators were asked to select from a list of options what they considered to be the three most important for improving their classroom instruction. Seventy percent of the 302 teachers surveyed indicated a need for more appropriate curricula. The special education coordinators also rated "more appropriate curricula" as one of their top needs.

Functional Curricula

An effective curricula is one that is *functional*. The need for and importance of a functional curricula for secondary students in transition has been well-documented (e.g., Brolin, 1989; Bullis & Reiman, 1989; Cipani, 1988; Matson, 1988; Mithaug, Martin, Agran, & Rusch, 1988). Several definitions for "functional" can be found in the literature. Some of these definitions suggest that a functional curricula is one that is different from the regular education curricula. For example, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DODDS) defines a functional skill as one that is essential in carrying out everyday social, personal, and the job tasks; functional learning activities/skills are those that attempt to address the needs of students who cannot meet the requirements of the regular education curriculum (Wimmer, 1981).

Whetstone (1992), who is a Program Specialist for Alabama's Division of Special Education, states that ". . . the focus of functionality should be across four curricula domains: (a) domestic, (b) recreation/leisure, (c) community, and (d) vocational. Secondary curricula should be designed to ensure that each student acquires competencies (skills) deemed essential to function adequately in the adult world (page 51)." Others suggest that functional is a relative term. That is, what is functional for one individual may not be functional for another (Cronin, et al., 1992; Dever, 1989; Hanley-Maxwell & Szymanski, 1992). For example, teaching a student a strategy to facilitate effective note taking during lectures in order to pass a world history class is functional if the student is college-bound or if the course provides knowledge and skills that are important for later usage (Cronin et. al., 1992). However, teaching the same strategy to a student who is not college-bound and whose classes do not require notetaking is not functional.

A functional curricula then is one that is comprised of skills the individual will need to succeed in *current* or *future* environments. It is one that helps prepare the individual to be maximally independent in adult life. In keeping with this definition, the content should reflect a variety of skills that influence a students' ability to perform as independently and productively as possible in appropriate school, home, community, and employment environments. Functional curricula facilitate the development of the skills essential to participate within a diversity of integrated environments (Falvey, 1989). Thus, the determination of the whether or not a curriculum is functional should be based on the individual's skills and abilities and the skills required in current and projected future environments.

Clark (1992) offers some guidelines for evaluating curricula. In order to assess the functional nature of a curriculum for a student, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Do the parents think the skills included are important?**
- **Does the student think the skills are important?**
- **Are the skills necessary in order to function independently in home, school/training, community, and work settings?**
- **Are the skills based on the student's current and/or future needs?**
- **Are the skills appropriate for the student's chronological age?**
- **What are the consequences of the student not learning the skills included in the curriculum?**

Thus, a functional curricula is one that is practical, relevant, useful, and usable for an individual student or a group of students. It answers the question, "What does the student need to know or be able to do both now and in the future?" (Clark, 1992).

Resources

- Bender, M. & Valletutti, P.J. (1985). *Teaching functional academics: A curriculum guide for adolescents and adults with learning problems*. Austin: PRO-ED.

  A complete curriculum that can be used to teach basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills to individuals with mild handicaps. The academic skills addressed are those necessary for everyday coping. A full series of instructional programs that directly promote competence as a resident, student, worker, consumer, and leisure participant are included. The guide serves as a flexible conceptual model that can be modified, expanded, and applied to a broad variety of individualized instructional needs.

  (ORDERS: PRO-ED, 8700 Shoal Creek Blvd., Austin, TX 78758, 512-451-3246)

- Brolin, D. (1989). *Life Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approach.* (3rd rev. ed.). Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

  Life-Centered Career Education (LCCE) is a competency-based approach to providing educational services to individuals with disabilities. The model is intended for students in grades K-12. The curriculum organizes 22 major competencies and 102 subcompetencies into three areas: (1) daily living, (2) personal-social, and (3) occupational skills. Included in the curriculum are sources of instructional materials and other resources, as well as a competency rating form and IEP form. Supplemental books which provide examples of activities that correspond to competencies and subcompetencies are also available.

  (ORDERS: Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Reston Drive, Reston, VA 22091-1589)

- Cronin, M.E., & Patton, J.R. (in press). *Life Skills for Students with Special Needs: A Guide for Developing Real Life Programs*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

  This resource provides a model for identifying situation-specific life skills. It organizes life skills for instructional purposes, showing how life skills can be related to scholastic and social skills. The life skill domains addressed include personal finance, practical math, health and hygiene, everyday science, practical communication, occupational development, community responsibility, and interpersonal relations. The scholastic and social skills included are reading, writing, listening, speaking, math applications, problem-solving, survival skills, and personal-social skills.

  (ORDERS: PRO-ED, 8700 Shoal Creek Blvd., Austin, TX 78758, 512-451-3246)

- Dever, R. B. (1988). *Community Living Skills: A Taxonomy*. Washington, DC: American Association on Mental Retardation.

The taxonomy provides a complete statement of the goals of community-based instruction. "It should prove useful to those who develop curricula in community agencies that have instruction programs for persons who have difficulty living in the community without assistance. . . In the final analysis, the Community Living Skills taxonomy is a career education document: it specifies instructional goals for curricula that can begin at infancy and end at the point at which learners take their places in the community. Basically, it provides a template to place on the local community to assist curriculum developers in understanding what they should look for when making decisions about what to teach. Once the endpoints are clear, it will become possible to develop curriculum pathways toward those goals."

(ORDERS: American Association on Mental Retardation, 1719 Kalorama Road, NW, Washington, DC 20009)

- Foss, G., & Vilhauer, D. A. (1986). *Working II - Interpersonal skills assessment and training for employment: Teachers' guide* [24 video lessons with assessment scale]. Santa Monica, CA: James Stanfield & Company.

An example of an excellent curriculum that is focused on a specific content domain is Working II - Interpersonal skills assessment and training for employment (Foss & Vilhauer, 1986). This curriculum incorporates field-tested methods for teaching handicapped persons the social content required for successful employment. It provides a nine-step teaching procedure designed to develop knowledge based on behavioral mastery of key social competencies. Included with the teacher's guide are three videotapes entitled, (a) Interaction with Supervisors, (b) Interaction with Co-Workers, and (c) An Introduction to the Teaching Procedures used in the Working II Program. Accompanying this curriculum is The Test of Interpersonal Competence for Employment (Foss, Cheney, & Bullis, 1986), which has 61-items designed to assess skills which have been empirically identified as important for job tenure.

- Irvin, L., Halpern, A., & Beckland, J. (ND). *Skills for independent living kit*. Monterey, CA: CTB/McGraw Hill.

Irvin, Halpern, and Beckland (ND) developed an Independent Living Kit, that emphasizes nine areas of practical life activity, such as job search skills, budgeting, and health. This curriculum includes more than 250 instructional objectives and is accompanied by the Social Prevocational Information Battery (Halpern & Irvin, 1986), which consists of nine tests designed to assess knowledge of skills and competencies regarded as important for the community adjustment of students with mild mental retardation. The nine subtests are Job Search Skills, Job Related Behavior, Banking, Budgeting, Purchasing Habits, Home Management, and Physical Health. The battery is intended primarily for junior and senior high school levels. The nine areas measured reflect five long-range educational goals, including (a) employability, (b) economic self-sufficiency, (c) family living, (d) personal habits, and (e) communication.

- Waford, M., et al. (1990). *Transition/School-Community Project.* Louisville, KY: Jefferson County Public Schools.

This project was developed to address the transition needs of ED/BD students. The manual details strategies to provide direct instruction in a "variety of actual, least restrictive environments both in and out of school. These may be environments in which the student can directly function or those in which he/she will probably function in the future." Domains addressed include social/emotional, recreational/leisure, community functioning, life functioning, and vocational/education. The stages of and procedures for implementing the program are described in great detail.

(ORDERS: Jefferson County Public Schools, Durrett Education Center, 4409 Preston Highway, Louisville, Kentucky 40213, 502-456-3320).

- Wehman, P., Renzaglia, A., & Bates, P. (1982). *Functional living skills for moderately and severely handicapped individuals.* Austin: PRO-ED.

This book describes how functional and age-appropriate programs can be implemented for adolescents and adults who have moderate and severe handicaps. Major areas of focus include domestic living, community mobility, social interaction training, leisure skill instruction, vocational training, and advocacy.

(ORDERS: PRO-ED, 8700 Shoal Creek Blvd., Austin, TX 78758, 512-451-3246)

- Wilcox, B., & Bellamy, G. T. (1987). *The activities catalog: An alternative curriculum for youth and adults with severe disabilities.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

- Wilcox, B., & Bellamy, G. T. (1987). *A comprehensive guide to the activities catalog: An alternative curriculum for youth and adults with severe disabilities.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Wilcox and Bellamy (1987) developed an Activities Catalog, which is considered to be an alternative curriculum for youth and adults with severe disabilities. This catalog is a field-tested curriculum that helps prepare young adults with disabilities for integrated home, leisure, and work settings. It is based on a functional approach to achieving performance goals through the mastery of activities. Step-by-step instructions are provided for each activity. Over 100 specific activities are subsumed under the three content areas of Leisure, Personal Management, and Work. The Activities Catalog is supplemented by a book (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1987) which serves as an introduction and guide to the curriculum system. Furthermore, it outlines the alternative approach and describes the procedures for using The Activities Catalog in high school, work, or residential settings.

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The Texas Transition Model is designed to provide a set of learning experiences that will affect the awareness, understanding, and behaviors necessary for the transition from school to work. "The model is not intended to be a rigid formula to be used exactly the same in every school or with every student. It is intended to be a flexible framework adaptable to the individual differences of the student, school, program and community."

(ORDERS: The University of Texas at Austin, Extension Instruction and Materials Center, P.O. Box 7218, Austin, TX 78713-7218, (512) 471-7716.)

- Wircenski, J. L. (1992). *Delivering Transition Skills to Special Populations Across the Curriculum.*

This curriculum is designed to be used in regular education classes to address the transition needs of **all** students. It was developed to be used as a guide to show how all teachers can teach transition skills in existing regular education curricula. Areas addressed include: generalizable skills (competencies which are basic, necessary, and transferable or common across vocational programs and jobs such as math skills and communication skills), job specific skills (competencies that will enable an individual to work effectively on a specific job), employability skills (competencies that will enable an individual to obtain and retain a job), work related skills (competencies that will enable an individual to establish effective interpersonal relationships on the job), and self help/independent living skills (competencies that will enable an individual to live independently in the community).

(ORDERS: The University of Texas at Austin, Extension Instruction and Materials Center, P.O. Box 7218, Austin, TX 78713-7218, (512) 471-7716.)

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Auburn's Program for College Students with Disabilities

Kelly Haynes

In April 1991, Auburn University established a service program for students with disabilities. One year later, over 200 Auburn Students with disabilities are receiving services. The purpose of this campus-wide program, which is housed in the Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education, is to assist Auburn students with disabilities in obtaining appropriate accommodations while they are attending the University.

As defined by federal law, disabilities may include conditions such as: learning disability, mobility impairment, visual impairment, hearing impairment, and chronic illness or disease (for example, AIDS, diabetes, multiple sclerosis). Accommodations for students are based upon individual need, and may include an array of services, such as extended time on exams, notetaker, permission to tape lectures, enhanced text (for visually impaired), taped text books, access to university programs and activities, amplification for class lectures, and/or interpreter services.

> *The largest group being served is students with learning disabilities (LD). Transition to college presents special problems for these students. Many of the LD students have come through the public school systems with little or no accommodations for their disability at the high school level.*

Of the 200 students currently being served, nearly 50% of them are students with learning disabilities. Students with mobility impairments, health conditions and hearing impairments each represent approximately 15% of the group. Visually impaired and students with psychological disabilities comprise the remainder of the 200 students. Transition to college can be from high school, junior college, work, a treatment facility, and/or the home unit. Each student presents with a unique array of problems which are dealt with in an individualized manner.

Services

The process by which students initiate services begins with a request for accommodations, followed by appropriate documentation of the disability. The documentation and an interview with the student provide the basis for the initial determination of reasonable accommodations. If the disability is obvious, or documented by historical data, or if the student is already classified by a federal agency as having a disability (i.e. Vocational Rehabilitation Services or the Veteran's Administration), the student will be served, pending receipt of records.

The accommodation plan can be modified in the future at the request of the student, or the program staff. In addition, the program staff will make recommendations to the student regarding available campus resources, given the student's present situation. It is the student's prerogative to take advantage of the services and recommendations, or not.

Services which are offered by the program office include, but are not restricted to:

Counseling
Reader Services
Interpreter Services
Braille Services
Test Proctoring
Disability Verification
Facilitation of Accessibility
Small Equipment Checkout
Priority Registration Status
Student Group
Resource Room
TDD Communication
Referral to Tutors
Learning Lab
Facilitation of In-class Accommodations

The Resource Room is open weekdays and houses equipment for students to use. Three computers have an array of adaptive hard and software which includes the capabilities of voice command activation (as opposed to keyboard) of WordPerfect 5.1, scanning print to speech or braille, synthesized speech screen reader, enlarged screen print, and grammar check. In addition, a closed circuit TV with a 20" monitor, and several types of table top magnifiers are also available.

Small equipment can be checked out for the quarter by students with disabilities. Included in this category are 30 cassette recorders for taping class lectures, 15 wireless FM systems for hearing impaired students, large button and talking calculators, halogen light magnifiers, 4 track recorder/players with headphones for books on tape, and notetaker tablets. Laptop computers are available for limited checkout for exams or specific classes.

The Presenting Problems of LD Students

The largest group being served is students with learning disabilities (LD). Transition to college presents special problems for these students. Many of the LD students have come through the public school systems with little or no accommodations for their disability at the high school level. Many are unaware that they could have had accommodations on the ACT or SAT exams, and very few have been referred to Adult Vocational Rehabilitation Services to determine their eligibility for services. These same students are at a loss when asked what accommodations they will need while attending Auburn University.

Once on campus, these students experience incredible stress, social isolation, and depression. Often they choose to try to lose their disability by avoiding support services initially, only later suffering a series of penalizing grade reports resulting in academic probation or even suspension. Why would a student get off to such a bad start? By definition, students with learning disabilities are average to above average intellectually, so what is the problem?

When one considers the actual transition from high school to college for the LD student, it becomes clear that a number of internal and external factors are altered in terms of demand characteristics. Internal factors are those which reside within the individual and cannot be seen. Internal factors would include the student's abilities, interests, self-advocacy, goals, stress level, problem-solving, coping strategies, and psychological stability. Figure 1 depicts the differences between the high school and college environment in the demand characteristic for each of these factors.

Figure 1

Demand Characteristics Of Internal Variables

Internal Variables	High School	College
Abilities/Skills	Low-High	High
Interests	Low	High
Psychological Stability	Low-High	High
Self-Advocacy	Low	High
Career Goals	Low	High
Time Management	Low	High
Stress/Anxiety	Low	High
Problem Solving	Low	High
Coping Strategies	Low	High

External factors are avenues by which the student must interact with the surrounding environment. External factors would include the student's actual residence, social network, medical care, financial status, work, daily living activities, transportation, safety, and communication. Figure 2 portrays the differences between the high school and college environment in the demand characteristic for each of these factors.

Figure 2

Demand Characteristics of External Variables

External Variables	High School	College
Physical Environment	Home: Low School: Low	Home: High School: High
Social Network	Low	High
Medical Management	Low	High
Financial Management	Low	High
Daily Living Activities	Low	High
Transportation	Low	High
Safety	Low	High
Communication	Low	High

The entire life environment of the student with a learning disability is changed by moving away to an institution of higher education. The security circle is distanced, the need for organization and time management is heightened significantly, and the everyday support of parents and familiar teachers are missing. Three factors can be used to predict successful transition to college: 1) acceptance and knowledge of the disability; 2) highly developed effective coping strategies; and 3) recognition that college will require more effort than high school!

Transition Plan

The weakest link in any program serving college students with disabilities is that the student must initiate services. This means that they must actually come into the office and talk to a counselor about their problems, provide documentation of their disability, request accommodations which will help, and carry through with the implementation of some accommodations (i.e. actually taping the lectures and using the tape later to fill in lecture notes).

The situation students with learning disabilities (and other disabilities) face upon entering college could be improved significantly in the future with the proper use of a transition plan. Through the transition plan, students can begin in high school to develop effective coping strategies such as taping lectures. A digital counter is essential; record the numbers each time the speaker is not clear, and play back only those places to fill in notes. Too often the student feels overwhelmed by the tape of a class, thinking they have to listen to the entire lecture again.

The transition plan should include accommodations such as extended time on exams, quizzes and tests if needed. It should provide for a reader and/or writer if a student needs this service. If a student has a disability in the area of reading, textbooks on tape should be incorporated into the plan.

For all students with learning disabilities, the plan should include training in word processing skills and use of spell check and grammar check software. All students should have goals of self-advocacy, and by their senior year in high school, they should be personally making the arrangements for classroom accommodations with each teacher. In Alabama by the age of 15, a student must verify if they are headed down the path toward a "certificate of attendance" or a "diploma" upon finishing high school. If they choose to go for a diploma, they must further specify regular or advanced. For students who are planning to attend college, the advanced diploma track provides the appropriate preparation. However, it may require more planning in terms of accommodations.

> ***The situation students with learning disabilities (and other disabilities) face upon entering college could be improved significantly in the future with the proper use of a transition plan.***

At the age of 16, students should be referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for eligibility determination and vocational evaluation. This enables the student to formulate realistic educational and career goals. If the student is not eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, then the high school counselor should be assisting the student with educational and career goals, and facilitating the transition to an institution of higher education whenever appropriate. It is important that the transition plan include the transmittal of documentation to the office which serves students with disabilities in the post-secondary institution.

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Assessment in Transition: A Frame of Reference for Practice[1]

Philip Browning and Connie Brechin

Assessment is a critical educational and service delivery component for the successful planning, programming, and eventual placing of youth with disabilities from school-to-work and community. Its importance is reflected, in part, in the literature that has emerged on the topic since the early 1980s, such as books (Halpern & Furher, 1984; Stodden, Ianacone, Boone, & Bisconer, 1987) special issues in national periodicals (Elrod, 1987, Stodden, 1986), journal articles (Dick, 1987; Elrod & Sorgenfrei, 1988), and instrument reviews (DeStefano, Linn & Markward, 1987). The purpose of this paper is to present a definition of assessment that is tailored to the unique considerations of the concept and practice of transition. Because of the nature of transition itself, the authors also discuss the need for a model program through which the assessment is practiced with students in transition.

Background

The purpose of assessment in transition is to (a) serve the wants, needs, preferences, and culture of the students in transition (Falvey, 1989), and (b) provide a functional information-base for decision-making about the development and fulfillment of students' individualized transition plans and related-programs. This background section provides a foundation for better understanding its nature and importance by examining both assessment and transition.

> ***. . . rather than using the traditional approach of measuring traits to predict performance, we should assess directly the transition-related competencies that will be taught, and base subsequent instructional decisions on the results of that assessment.***

Assessment

Assessment ". . . usually refers to multiple methods of gathering pertinent data (information) on variables that are relevant to a particular decision-making process (Frey, 1984, p. 14, authors underline). Accordingly, assessment is considered to be a broader term than either measurement or testing and therefore may include such methods and procedures as ratings, questionnaires, naturalistic observations, and interviews (Halpern & Furher, 1984). Also, the assessment information to be gathered should be relevant to the user(s) in the decision-making process. As such, the types of information to be obtained should depend on the different users and their intended uses of that information, with the recognition that such information is to "aid" or "assist" them in making program-related decisions. Finally, when tests methods are used, it is critical that both the data gatherer and user have a sufficient knowledge-base about the traditional and functional approaches to measurement.

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[1] This paper is an outgrowth of a Task Force on Functional Assessment in Transition. The Task Force was chaired by Connie Brechin and initiated and sponsored by Alabama's Division of Rehabilitation Services.

The traditional testing approach (norm-referenced) is for the purpose of comparing a person's test performance to the test performance of his or her peers. In other words, one's results on a standardized test (intelligence, ability, aptitude, trait) allows the tester to interpret how that person's performance compares to "norms" of other individuals with similar characteristics. A major assumption underlying this approach is that standardized measures of existing aptitudes, interests, and traits can be used to predict subsequent learning, performance, and adjustment. This assumption continues to be empirically challenged, especially in terms of standardized or norm-referenced test results that are applied to persons who are more severely developmentally disabled (Halpern, Lehmann, Irvin & Heiry, 1982). Another note of caution is the fact that traditional, standardized tests provide little or no practical information that can be used to design, conduct, and evaluate educational and training interventions.

The functional measurement approach (criterion-referenced) measures a person's development of particular skills in terms of absolute levels of mastery. Thus, rather than comparing the individual's performance to the performance of the norm of a group, the individuals' performance is compared to an objective standard, with the test items often linked directly to specific instructional and training objectives (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1991). Within the context of transition, functional assessment refers to ". . . assessments that describe and define in specific and objective terms those skills within the student's repertoire that allow him or her to participate in a wide variety of integrated community environments (Falvey, 1989, p. 6)."

In summary, this functional approach is required if the results of transition assessment are to have direct implications for program planning and implementation. That is, rather than using the traditional approach of measuring traits to predict performance, we should assess directly the transition-related competencies that will be taught, and base subsequent instructional decisions on the results of that assessment. In addition to allowing for continuous, on-going assessment of their progress toward instructional/training objectives, this approach also allows for a "functional" diagnostic assessment (i.e., what transition skills the individual has and has not mastered and what type of instructional considerations might be necessary in order to teach to the mastery of those skills that are necessary for successful transition).

In order to tailor a utilitarian definition of assessment to the area for which it is intended, it is first necessary to understand the meaning of that area, which in this case is transition. In other words, the authors contend that the transition definition one elects to incorporate into their practice will effect the nature of the assessment they provide in terms of (a) what type of assessment is performed, (b) when and how often it is done, (c) who does it, (d) how the assessment information is to be used, and (e) who the users are.

In the early 1980s, Madeline Will (1984) said that transition was ". . . an outcome oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment. Transition is a period that includes high school, the point of graduation, additional post secondary education or adult services, and the initial years of employment. Transition is a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the risks of life." (Will, 1984, page 2). Two years hence, Wehman, et al (1987) offered a transition definition that was in keeping with Will's employment focus, by stating that transition was ". . . a carefully planned process, which may be initiated either by school personnel or adult service providers, to establish and implement a plan for either employment or additional vocational training of a handicapped student . . . (Wehman, et al, 1986, page 114).

As expected, alternative models to these two employment restricted definitions emerged in the literature. Halpern (1985) offered a contrasting definition that suggested that the primary focus of transitional services should be living successfully in one's community. In addition to employment, he suggested two other dimensions: (a) the quality of a person's residential environment, and (b) the adequacy of one's social and interpersonal network. Brolin's definition (1992) also expands upon the employment focused definitions, by viewing transition as a process-oriented educational program (K-12) that is organized to, among other things, ". . . provide school, home, and community-based instruction experiences that will teach students the skills, behaviors, and attitudes needed for successful adult living, interacting with others, and working (p. 25)."

Finally, a legislatively couched definition that will likely guide transition developments, programs, and policies for the remainder of the 1990s is provided:

> **The term 'transition services' means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement form school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act P. L. 101-476, 602 (a) (19).**

While each of the above definitions has its own unique features, there are four characteristics that are common to all of them. In essence, transition is most commonly viewed as a process that is (a) longitudinal in nature, beginning with the students no later than the start of high school and most often continuing through their post-secondary education; (b) individually plan-directed in terms of written desired goals, needed services, and procedures for implementation; (c) collaboratively implemented by interagency personnel and significant others (teachers, parents, counselors, employers), and (d) outcome oriented in terms of the youth's personal, vocational, residential, and community success (depending on the definition). It is these common elements that serve as the parameters for tailoring the assessment definition subsequently offered. For example, there should be multiple time periods for obtaining information due to the time span of the transition process. The purpose of the information is to provide a foundation for the plan that is to be enacted, and the types of information to be gathered should be determined by the goal(s) that are specified in the plan.

A Definition of Assessment in Transition

The authors consider functional assessment in transition to be the on-going process of obtaining and properly using both person and environment-based assessment information for the purpose of aiding in decision-making about individualized program planning and implementation of needed educational, vocational, and community-based services for youth with disabilities in transition. This definition of assessment in transition includes eight key terms: *assessment information*, *person-environment*, *on-going*, *proper utilization*, *decision making*, *individualized*, *program planning and implementation*, and *services*. Each of these elements is defined here in order to give further meaning and clarity to the definition.

> ***functional assessment in transition [is] the on-going process of obtaining and properly using both person and environment-based assessment information for the purpose of aiding in decision-making about individualized program planning and implementation of needed educational, vocational, and community-based services for youth with disabilities in transition.***

1. Assessment information refers to the transition-related information that may be based on different measurement approaches (Norm-Referenced and Criterion-Referenced Tests), as well as an array of data collection methods (interviews, questionnaires, self-reports, rating scales, tests, and direct observations). As noted under decision-making below, the type of information to be gathered is directly related to the purpose and goal of transition.

2. Person and environment means that the assessment information may be obtained about and directly from the student in transition, from others about that student, or from and about the environment(s) that have relevance to the student. Also, person-environment implies that there is a dynamic interaction between the two and therefore assessment information must be collected on both, in order to evaluate the relationship (or discrepancy) between the student in transition and the environment in which s/he will reside.

3. On-going assessment is necessary because the transition process is developmental in nature, extended over a period of years, and requires different programmatic emphases at different stages in the process.

4. Proper-utilization implies that the users of assessment-based information be sufficiently knowledgeable about the purpose of the measurement approaches and methods used (traditional vs. functional), their respective strengths and limitations, and applications in transition planning and programming.

5. Decision-making is using the assessment information to "aid" or "assist" in making program-related decisions about the students in transition. As such, the assessment information obtained must have specified utility that will minimize the practice of simply gathering information for the sake of information. Furthermore, the type of information gathered is guided by the fact the decision-making process should be directed toward the goal of preparing students with disabilities for eventual personal, vocational, residential, and community adjustment.

6. Individualized assessment indicates that the obtained information is for the purpose of tailoring the transition goals, services and programs to the unique wants, needs, preferences and culture of each individual.

7. Program planning and implementation should be based, in part, on assessment information. In other words, it should serve as a foundation for developing and tailoring the "individualized transition plans" for each individual.

8. Needed services refers to an array of wants and needs that students in transition may have in order to help assure them success in transition. Such an array of services implies a broad definition of transition, with the outcome including personal, vocational, residential and community adjustment.

An Assessment Program for Practice

In order to best assure that functional assessment will play an important and contributing role in the successful transition for youth with disabilities, it is also proposed that transition personnel develop at their respective sites a well planned and organized assessment program that is guided by a definition of assessment tailored to transition. The rationale for such a program is based on the premise that assessment in transition needs to be both collaborative and systematic.

Collaborative

Transition, by definition, requires a collaborative effort among a number of personnel who represent different interests and responsibilities in the process. All of these parties should be involved in planning and implementing an individual's transition program. Since assessment's purpose is to serve as a foundation for decision-making in the student's individualized plan they collectively design and implement, they should also collaborate with one another about the needed assessment information.

Second, the students in transition would be better served through such a program because their transition plan and related-services would be based upon a more organized, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary body of assessment information. In other words, rather than sporadically and arbitrarily gathering assessment information in accordance to each team members own needs and wishes, a "Program" would make for a more purposeful and systematic collaboration.

Systematic

Certain types of assessment information are needed at different stages of the transition process. Also, at different phases of the process, different team members may need information that is uniquely related to their particular service area, such as the teacher and the mastery of basic skills and the counselor and vocational placement. Rather than all team members being responsible for obtaining their own information for their own decision-making usage, however, they should systematically develop and approve an assessment program that indicates who needs what type of assessment information and at what stage of the transition process they need it. Not only would this help to minimize duplication of information gathering efforts, but it could also increase the resources needed for obtaining such information. For example, the teacher may be in the best position to obtain certain vocational-related information like mastery of job interview skills for the rehabilitation counselor; whereas, the field-based counselor may be able to obtain important community-based information for the teacher to embellish in the classroom curricula.

> ***. . . they should systematically develop and approve an assessment program that indicates who needs what type of assessment information and at what stage of the transition process they need it.***

When considering such an assessment program, the authors suggest that it should be (a) cooperatively developed and approved by all significant service providers engaged in the transition process (teacher, rehabilitation counselor, parent, vocational educator); (b) designed to systematically gather student/client-environment assessment information; (c) enacted when the site's transition program starts and continued throughout its duration; (d) annually reviewed, and modified if needed, by all users of program-related assessment information; and (e) based on a management system that accurately and cumulatively records the assessment information in a confidentially monitored central file for eligible users' accessibility.

In summary, given the importance of assessment in transition and the nature of transition itself, an assessment program couched in a definitional framework is essential for "best practice." Such a program would help answer the questions of what type of information is to be gathered, who is responsible for gathering it, when and how often is it to be gathered, who is responsible for recording and interpreting it, how is it to be used, and who will be the users.

Summary

Successful transition for most youth with disabilities requires an array of educational, vocational and community-based services that are provided by different interagency personnel and delivered at different stages in the transition process. Also essential to its success are the collaboratively developed program plans that are designed for each individual in the transition program. Central to this paper is the authors' position that the soundness of these plans is predicated, in part, upon the usage of assessment information that is "functional" in its application. This requirement is met by linking obtained information to the transition goal(s) for each student and then properly applied to decision-making that is to lead to the successful achievement of that goal.

All transition team members should incorporate into their practice a common framework of the meaning of functional assessment in transition. The reader has been provided such a definition with a brief discussion of each of its main features. The extent to which all collectors and users of assessment information understand and utilize a common framework should significantly enhance their collaborative communication and practice efforts in transition should be significantly enhanced.

> ***. . . given the importance of assessment in transition . . . a (assessment) program would help answer the questions of what type of information is to be gathered, who is responsible for gathering it, when and how often is it to be gathered, who is responsible for recording and interpreting how it is to be used, and who will be the users.***

Finally, given the nature and duration of the transition process and the multiple parties involved, it is suggested that each local transition site consider developing and implementing a well planned and organized "assessment program" that is guided by a definition of assessment tailored to the transition process. Such a program should (a) be the product of a collaborative input from the transition team members at each respective site, (b) be designed to more systematically gather and utilize student/client-environment assessment information, (c) be long-range and thus allow for strategic, periodic times in which appropriate assessment information is collected, (d) be subject to change and refinement upon annual review, and (e) provide for a central place to store and retrieve the assessment information pertaining to each student/client in the transition program.

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Alabama's Rehabilitation Transition Counselors: A Statewide Study [1]

Philip Browning and Connie Brechin

Alabama's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has played a significant role in the state's efforts to prepare its secondary students with disabilities for a more successful transition from school-to-work and community. In 1985, for example, the first formal cooperative agreements with local schools were developed by the Division, and, within two years, DRS had signed interagency agreements with all of the state's 129 Local Education Agencies (LEAs), as well as assigned a rehabilitation liaison counselor to every secondary school (Browning, Whetstone, & Boswell, 1992).

A major result of these cooperative agreements between vocational rehabilitation and special education is that the transition caseloads in rehabilitation have steadily increased. For example, the number of transition clients was 9,216 students in 1987, as compared to 13,560 students in 1991, 47% increase; and since 1987, successful closures have more than doubled, with 1,630 such cases successfully rehabilitated in 1991, for over 25% of DRS's successful closures for that year.

> ***. . . since 1987, successful closures [transition cases] have more than doubled, with 1,630 such cases successfully rehabilitated in 1991, for over 25% of DRS's successful closures for that year.***

The purpose of this study was to examine the opinions and practices of the state's rehabilitation counselors who are assigned to serve secondary students with disabilities. This study complements the results of a recently completed statewide investigation of Alabama's secondary special education teachers and special education coordinators (Brown, Browning, & Dunn, 1992). Like the previous study, the findings of the present one are to, among other things, provide state personnel with important information as a decision-making base for program planning and improvement in the transition of its students with disabilities.

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[1] The select findings reported in this paper are included in the following document containing over 49 tables and adjoining graphs: Browning, P & Brechin, C. (1993). ***Alabama's Rehabilitation Counselors Who Serve Transition Clients: A Statewide Examination***. Auburn, AL: Program for Training and Development, Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education, College of Education, Auburn University (available for $6.00 at this address or call (205) 844-5500).

Method

Sample

A survey instrument was sent to Alabama's rehabilitation counselors assigned to serve transition clients (students with disabilities from ages 15-25) through the state's Division of Rehabilitation Services. Fifty-nine of the 76 counselors completed their survey instrument for a return rate of 78%. However, not all 59 counselors answered every survey item.

The 59 respondents had been a rehabilitation counselor for an average of 9 years/6 months and had been serving "transition" clients for an average of 6 years/6 months. Also, 47 (82%) of them reported that they were assigned to work with one or more local education agencies (LEAs) for an average of 3.4 LEAs per counselor (range = 1-13).

Seventeen counselors (29%) had a caseload of only transition clients, as compared to 27 (47%) whose caseload consisted of one-half (or less) of transition clients. Finally, the average number of transition clients served by each of 54 counselors who answered this item was 118. In all, these counselors served a total of 6,372 transition clients, with a range of 10 to 300 transition clients per counselor.

Nineteen (37%) of 52 counselors reported that they officially added the students to their caseload while the students were in the 9th grade, and 70% of the counselors served their transition clients before the students entered the 11th grade. For over half of the counselors, no less than 50% of their transition clients were minority. And, over a third of these counselors said that there were "unique barriers" for their minority clients that impeded their successful transition.

Questionnaire

The survey instrument consisted of 60 items clustered into seven categories (see below). A protocol for its development was two previously constructed survey forms that were designed to obtain similar information from the state's secondary special education teachers and special education coordinators (Brown, Browning, & Dunn, 1992).

Results

The results are reported within each of the instrument's categorical areas: (a) Individualized Transition Program: IEP/IWRP, (b) Student/Parent Participation in Transition, (c) Assessment, (d) Vocational Preparation, (e) Service Coordination, (f) Transition Counselor Competencies, and (g) Transition Outcome. First, however, the counselors' perceived importance of five of these transition components is presented. A more complete report of these and other findings is available elsewhere (Browning & Brechin, 1992).

Importance of Transition Components

The counselors were introduced to six transition components (for example, IEP/ITP) and asked to report for each component their level of importance in preparing their clients for a successful transition from school to work. In each case, they were provided with five response options (not important, only slightly important, only moderately important, important, very important). Table 1 presents the results for each component but only in terms of counselor frequencies for important and very important.

Table 1

Importance of Transition Components as Perceived by Counselors

	N Counselors	Important		Very Important		Combined %
Transition Components		N	%	N	%	%
IEP/IWRP	58	25	43	16	28	71*
Client Participation	59	25	42	16	28	84
Parent Participation	59	25	42	28	48	90
Assessment	58	19	33	35	60	93
Vocational Preparation	58	24	41	30	52	93
Service Coordination	59	22	37	30	51	88

* 71% of 58 counselors said that the development of a good IEP/IWRP was either important (43%) or very important (28%) for the successful transition of their clients.

Individualized Transition Program (IEP/IWRP)

Given this component's level of importance (see Table 1), it is interesting that 33 (60%) of 54 counselors reported that they did not coordinate their clients' IEPs with their IWRPs (for example, tailor together the goals and objectives of the two plans). However, in a related item, the counselors said that the following two competencies either "*needed*" (38%) or "*very much needed*" (48%) to be addressed in in-service training: (a) Ability to more effectively coordinate IWRP/IEP goals and objectives which relate to my clients' transition-related programs and services; and (b) Ability to produce a higher quality IWRP, by more effectively coordinating/using ALL assessment information related to my transition clients (see Table 2).

Nearly half of the counselors reported that they either "*seldom*" (43%) or "*never*" (5%) met with the special education teachers (and others) to develop their clients' IEP/ITPs; whereas, only 7 (12%) of them reported that they "always" attended the meetings. Also, 16 of 30 counselors who said that they either "*often*" or "*always*" attended the meetings reported that they did so for only half (or less than) of their clients. The major reasons the counselors who either "*seldom*" or "*never*" attended the IEP/ITP meetings were (a) unaware of the meetings (56%), (b) inadequate time (47%), (c) inconvenient scheduling of meetings (25%), and (d) their role in the IEP meetings was unnecessary (16%). Other reasons offered by them included, "not asked", "involvement not requested by the school", and "some have felt that I was not important to their IEP".

Client/Parent Participation in the Transition Plan

Client participation. In concurrence with the counselors' perceived importance of client participation (see Table 1), over 80% of them also reported that their clients' vocational success was either "*much related*" (46%) or "*highly related*" (36%) to their level of self-determination. When asked to select from a set of 11 factors what they considered to be the most important ones for successful rehabilitation outcome, one of the factors most frequently chosen was "active client involvement in transition."

Over one-half of the counselors reported that they were "*only moderately satisfied*" (or less than) with their clients level of self-interest and self-participation in planning their own transition program. And finally, 48% of them said that "the ability to get my transition clients to become more actively involved in planning and implementing their transition program" was either "*needed*" (28%) or "*very much needed*" (20%) as a focus for in-service training (see Table 2).

Parent participation. In concurrence with the counselors' perceived importance of parent participation (see Table 1), 64% of the counselors reported that their clients' vocational success was either "*much related*" (47%) or "*highly related*" (17%) to the parents level of involvement. And, when asked to select from a set of 11 factors what they considered to be the most important ones for successful rehabilitation outcome, one of the factors most frequently chosen was "active parent involvement in their children's transition."

Eighty percent of the counselors reported that they were "*only moderately satisfied*" (or less than) with the support and involvement they received from the parents. Also, 54% of them said that "the ability to get the parents of my transition clients more actively involved in their children's transition plan and program" was either "*needed*" (24%) or "*very much needed*" (30%) as a topic for in-service training (see Table 2).

Assessment

In spite of the importance given to assessment (see Table 1), almost 40% of the counselors were only "*moderately satisfied*" (or less than) with its usefulness in helping them to make appropriate client decisions. Also, in a related item, 80% of the counselors said that either "*much improvement was needed*" (7%), "*improvement was needed*" (19%), or "*only slight improvement was needed*" (20%) for better and/or more useful and functional assessment information. And, the counselors said that the following three competencies either "*needed*" or "*very much needed*" to be addressed in in-service training: (a) Knowledge of assessment approaches which stress a close relationship between client evaluation information obtained and the type of transition services that should be delivered (48%); (b) Knowledge of an array of assessment instruments that are appropriate for my transition clients (36%); and (c) Ability to evaluate and select from an array of assessment instruments those which are most "appropriate" for different types of transition clients with varying needs (18%) (see Table 2).

Nearly 70% of the counselors reported that their clients received a vocational assessment before the 11th grade, and 37 (63%) of them said that they were the ones who were primarily responsible for obtaining the assessment information. The three skill areas in which assessment information was provided to most of the clients was (a) vocational skills, (b) community living skills, and (c) personal-social skills.

Surprisingly, only 22% of 59 counselors reported that all of their clients received a formal assessment to be used in helping them to develop their clients' transition plan (IWRP). Also, nearly half of the counselors reported that there was no central storage place for their clients assessment information so that everyone involved with the client could have access to it.

Nearly 70% of the counselors reported that their clients received a vocational assessment before the 11th grade . . .

Vocational Preparation

Of the 47 counselors who reported that they were either "*familiar*" or "*very familiar*" with their clients high school curricula, only 30% of them said that they thought it was either "*adequate*" or "*very adequate*". With respect to vocational preparation specifically, over 90% of the counselors reported that vocational preparation was either "*important*" (41%) or "*very important*" (52%) for their clients successful transition from school to work (see Table 1).

The most common type of work experience in which the transition clients participated was in the "regular vocational education classes." By contrast, only half of the counselors reported that their clients participated in "community-based" work experience programs. Also, the persons reported to be most responsible for coordinating work experience programs for their clients were (a) the counselors themselves (31%), (b) the vocational education teacher (22%), and (c) the special education teacher (22%).

The three most frequent skill areas in which the counselors said that their clients needed better and/or more effective training were (a) vocational skill training, (b) personal-social skill training, and (c) functional academic skill training. Also, the counselors reported that the three most important ways for improving vocational preparation were (a) better and/or more community-based work experience (30%), (b) better and/or more vocational education experience (16%), and (c) better high school vocational curriculum (15%).

Finally, 63% of the counselors reported that the vocational education teacher was the person who provided vocational instruction to their transition clients; whereas, 25% said the special education teacher was. In a related item, all but one counselor reported that their clients participated in regular vocational education, and, 69% of them said that half (or less) of their clients participated. Also, 56% of the counselors said that "the ability to more effectively coordinate transition planning and programming between vocational education and rehabilitation services" was either "*needed*" (28%) or "*very much needed*" (28%) as a topic for in-service training (see Table 2).

Coordination of Services

Even though the counselors considered this component to be important (see Table 1), nearly half (45%) of them reported that they were "*only moderately satisfied*" (or less than) with the coordination of services among the agencies. Also, they said that the following two competencies either "*needed*" or "*very much needed*" to be addressed in in-service training: (a) Knowledge of eligibility requirements, program mandates, and resource opportunities of ALL agencies that provide transition-related services (70%); and (b) Ability to produce stronger transition programs for my clients, by more effectively coordinating/using ALL community transition services (56%) (see Table 2).

Eighteen of 55 counselors (32%) reported that one of the most important ways to improve the coordination of services was for there to be a "more effective system for exchanging information". Finally, over 90% of them reported that they make arrangements with other community agencies to facilitate their clients' transition from school-to-adult life.

Rehabilitation Outcome

Nearly half of 56 counselors considered their clients to be only "*moderately successful*" in their transition from school to work; whereas, the remaining counselors (52%) considered their clients to be "*successful.*" Finally, when asked to select from a set of 11 factors the ones that they considered to be the most important for successful rehabilitation outcome, the three most frequently chosen were: (a) "active client involvement in transition", (b) "employment opportunities", and (c) "active parent involvement in their children's transition."

Competency Areas Related to Transition

The counselors were provided 12 competencies related to transition and asked to rate each one according to its level of importance, and the extent to which it needed to be addressed in in-service training. With both questions, the counselors were provided with five response options (Q1: unimportant, only slightly important, only moderately important, important, very important; Q2: not needed, only slightly needed, only moderately needed, needed, very much needed).

Table 2 presents the counselors' opinions for each of the 12 competencies in terms of their level of importance and their need for inclusion in in-service training. In both cases, only the combined frequencies for important and very important and needed and very much needed are reported.

Table 2
Competency Areas Related to Transition: Their Degree of Importance and Need for Training as Perceived by the Counselors

Importance		Needed for Training		COMPETENCIES
N	%	N	%	
41*	84	35**	70	Knowledge of eligibility requirements, program mandates, and resource opportunities of ALL agencies that provide transition-related services.
48	96	35	70	Ability to increase employer interests in the vocational opportunities for my clients who are in transition.
41	82	28	56	Ability to more effectively coordinate transition planning and programming between vocational education and rehabilitation services.
47	94	28	56	Ability to produce stronger transition programs for my clients, by more effectively coordinating/using ALL community transition services/resources
42	84	27	54	Ability to get the parents of my transition clients more actively involved in their children's transition plan and program.
43	86	26	52	Ability to produce a higher quality IWRP, by more effectively coordinating/using ALL assessment information related to my transition clients.
45	90	24	48	Ability to get my transition clients to become more actively involved in planning and implementing their transition program.
45	90	24	48	Ability to more effectively coordinate transition planning and programming between special education and rehabilitation services.
44	87	24	48	Knowledge of assessment approaches which stress a close relationship between client evaluation information obtained and the type of transition services that should be delivered.
38	76	19	38	Ability to more effectively coordinate IWRP/IEP goals and objectives which relate to my clients' transition-related programs and services.
34	68	18	36	Knowledge of an array of assessment instruments that are appropriate for my transition clients.
27	54	14	18	Ability to evaluate and select from an array of assessment instruments those which are most "appropriate" for different types of transition clients with varying needs.

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* 41 (84%) of the counselors reported this competency to be either "important" or "very important".

** 35 (70)% of the counselors reported this competency to be either "needed" or "very much needed" for in-serivce training

Discussion

Clearly, the rehabilitation counselors viewed as important (or very important) all transition components included in the survey: IEP/ITP, client/ parent participation, assessment, vocational preparation, and service coordination. Within this context, discussion is directed to each component in terms of its results and implications for either training, policy making, and further research. Also, throughout this section, complementary results are presented from the recently completed study with Alabama's secondary special education teachers and special education coordinators (Brown, Browning, & Dunn, 1992). The above reference will not be cited in these instances.

Individualized Transition Plan (IEP/IWRP)

In spite of the perceived importance of IEP/ITP meetings, nearly half of the counselors reported that they seldom or never attended them and, for those that often attended, as many as half of them reported that they did so for no more than half of their clients. The typical assumption is that counselors do not attend the IEP/ITP meetings because they do not have the time. The results of this survey, however, was revealing in that other reasons were given, such as being unaware of the meetings, the scheduling inconvenience, not being asked, as well as not being considered by others to be important to the IEP process.

Half of the counselors reported the need to learn to develop a higher quality IWRP, and almost 40% of them expressed the need to learn to more effectively coordinate the goals and objectives of the IEP and IWRP. This need was further underscored when as many as 60% of the counselors said that they did not tailor together the goals and objectives of the IEP and IWRP. Unquestionably, the IEP/ITP is a viable topic for in-service training!

> ***The results of this survey . . . were revealing in that other reasons were given [for not attending the IEP meetings], such as being unaware of the meetings, the scheduling inconvenience, not being asked, as well as not being considered by others to be important to the IEP process.***

Since the development of the student's IEP/ITP plan is to be a joint undertaking, the problem does not rest solely with the counselors. Just as they should become aware of the student's IEP, for example, teachers also should become familiar with the student's IWRP. Also, through in-service training, teachers need to be made more aware of the value of the counselors' role in transition and acquire facilitative strategies for increasing their counselor participation in the student's planning meetings. Ultimately, however, the answer to this and other collaborative problems in developing and implementing a quality transition plan and program may reside in the team approach to transition (Halpern, Benz, & Lindstrom, 1992).

Client/parent participation

Nearly 85% of the counselors attested to the importance of their clients being actively involved in developing their own transition plans and programs, and they considered that their transition clients' involvement and self-determination was related to the clients' vocational success. Nevertheless, over 50% of the counselors said that they were only "moderately" satisfied (or less than) with their clients' level of involvement, and almost half of them expressed a need for this problem to be addressed in in-service training.

Likewise, parent involvement in their children's transition program was viewed as being important by 90% of the counselors and, in fact, over 60% of them considered the parents' involvement to be related to their children's vocational success. Yet, 80% of the counselors said that they were only moderately satisfied (or less than) with the parents' involvement and support. Similarity, in another statewide study, nearly half of the secondary special education teachers surveyed reported that they were either "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with the support they received from their students' parents.

In summary, half of the counselors expressed a need to improve their ability to get both their clients and parents more involved in the transition process. Given the counselors' perceived importance of this component and their expressed need for improvement in their ability to do so, we have yet another important topic for in-service training.

Assessment

Closely related to the IEP/ITP component is the area of assessment, which was considered to be the most important of the transition elements. Sixty-percent of the counselors said that it was "very important" as compared, for example, to only 28% who gave the same level of importance to the IEP/ITP. Its significance to the students' individualized transition program rests with the premise that the quality of an IEP/ITP Plan is determined, in part, by the nature of the assessment information gathered for developing the plan. As such, it is important to note that nearly 40% of the counselors were only "moderately" satisfied (or less than) with the assessment information and its usefulness in helping them to make appropriate client decisions (for example, developing a quality IEP/ITP). And in a related item, less than a fourth of the counselors reported that either "no improvement" or "only slight improvement" was needed for better and/or more useful and functional assessment information.

The state has taken recent action to address this area of assessment. First, through the Rehabilitation Division's statewide task force on Functional Assessment in Transition, a policy document was developed (Browning & Brechin, 1992) that suggested the need for the establishment of an assessment program for secondary students in transition at the local level. A program, it was proposed, would provide guidelines and procedures for such matters as the type of assessment information to obtained, who would be responsible for gathering it, time periods for acquiring it, standard ways for reporting it, and locating a central place for storing and retrieving such information. Nearly half of the counselors, for example, reported in this study that there was no central storage place for their clients assessment information so that everyone involved with the client could have access to the information. Finally, the state now has committed to funding two local transition teams for developing an exemplary functional assessment program to be used as model demonstration in-service training sites for others who are interested in improving upon the area of functional assessment in transition.

Vocational Preparation

Given the importance of vocational preparation for client outcome (employment), it is alarming that only 27% of 58 counselors reported that their transition clients participated in community-based work experience programs. This finding is supported by the state's special education teachers; 22% of those surveyed said that their students were instructed in community work sites. Interestingly, both the counselors in this study and the special education coordinators in the other study reported that one of the three most important ways to improve the vocational preparation programs was through community-based work experience.

> ***. . . only half of the counselors reported that their clients participated in "community-based" work experience programs.***

Fortunately, the state has taken a major step in addressing this problem through the provision of incentive mini-grants for local LEAs to establish work experience programs and opportunities for its students. As of this writing, 32 such grants have been provided for a total of $100,000 per year. A number of these sites have now established advanced vocational secondary programs in the state. Dothan (Spraybarry, Holmes, Sasser, and Stringer, 1992), Gardendale (Parker, 1992), and Jefferson County (Lavender, 1992), for example, have now developed exemplary programs that can be used as demonstration sites and in-service training laboratories to other special education teachers and coordinators throughout the state.

The second area discussed is vocational education, which according to over 60% of the counselors, is the primary way through which students receive their vocational preparation. In the other statewide study, 69% of the special education teachers said that the vocational education teacher was the **only one** who provided vocational instruction to their special education students. Finally, over 50% of the counselors said that there needed to be more effective coordination of transition planning and programming between vocational education and rehabilitation services.

One major recommendation forthcoming from this study, as well as from the other survey with special education teachers and coordinators, is the need to conduct a similar study with the state's vocational education program. Important questions yet to be answered include: Do the vocational education instructors participate in the students IEP/ITP meetings, and, if not, why? Do vocational instructors receive the vocational assessment information obtained by the counselors that assists them in providing more appropriate and individualized vocational training to those students? Given that a major responsibility of vocational education is the placement of its students (Carl Perkins Act, 1992), do vocational instructors coordinate their efforts with rehabilitation counselors? How do vocational educators perceive the problem(s) of interagency proactive in serving the students in transition? Do the vocational administrators work with the special education coordinators in designing a cooperative transition program for their secondary students with disabilities?. The answers to these and other questions, coupled with the data banks now obtained with special education teachers, coordinators and rehabilitation counselors, will provide state administrators with a basis for decision-making and policy-making for the improvement of its transition programs and practices.

Coordination

Even though over 85% of the counselors said that the coordination of services among various agencies was important, over half of the counselors were only moderately satisfied (or less than) with the coordination of services. In response to a similar question in the other study, half of the sample's special education teachers and half of the special education coordinators said that they were either "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with their system's arrangements for assisting their students in the transition from school-to-adult life. Also, the special education coordinators reported that one of the more important ways for improving their programs was for them to be provided with technical assistance to establish transition agreements with community agencies.

> ***. . . when asked to select from a set of 11 factors the ones that they considered to be the most important for successful rehabilitation outcome, the three most frequently chosen were: (a) active client involvement in transition, (b) employment opportunities, and (c) "active parent involvement in their children's transition.***

Also, over half of the counselors said they needed to improve their ability to produce stronger transition programs for their clients by more effectively coordinating and using ALL community transition services/resources. Likewise, 134 special education teachers (45%) reported that they needed improvement in their ability to coordinate programming between school and community settings. Also, 70% of the counselors and 39% of the special education teachers said that they needed improvement in their knowledge of eligibility requirements, program mandates, and resource opportunities of ALL agencies that provide transition-related services. Finally, over 30% of the counselors reported that the most effective way to improve coordination among agencies was for there to be a more effective system for exchanging information.

Clearly, the area of coordination is a matter that needs serious attention. As discussed elsewhere (Browning, Brown, & Dunn, 1992), one important consideration is the development and implementation of a coherent and consistent policy for interagency action at all levels, a policy that includes goals, understanding of service eligibility and entitlement requirements, commonly shared language and information among service delivery systems, and consensus on the type and scope of services provided within each level of the services delivery system (Johnson, Bruininks, & Thurlow, 1987). While such a state policy already may be in existence, the data from both surveys strongly suggests that, if it is, it is either not being enacted, needs revising, or needs to be articulated to its users at the local level.

An interagency plan should be based upon valid and tested transition interagency models, a number of which are now available (for example, Bates, Bronkema, Ames, & Hess, 1992). Also, once the interagency policy plan and its agreements have been drafted, refined, and/or renewed, all persons who participate in the transition process, including counselors, should become fully informed about the plan's guidelines and procedures for improved cooperative and coordinated services. In other words, once such a plan is drafted, those at the local level must become fully informed of its goals, guidelines, and procedures so that it can be effectively implemented. Presumably, findings such as those reported above will further signal to administrators the importance of interagency practices and aide them in their efforts to develop a "best practices" plan with respect to the coordination of the state's various agencies that serve its secondary students with disabilities.

Rehabilitation Outcome

The counselors were evenly divided regarding the extend to which they considered their clients transition from school to work to be successful. Specifically, when asked to rate their clients' outcome success, using five options ranging from unsuccessful to very successful, nearly half of the counselors said "only moderately successful" and the other half said "successful."

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Alabama's Secondary Special Education Teachers and Special Education Coordinators: A Statewide Study [1]

Philip Browning, Clarence Brown, and Caroline Dunn

This paper reports findings from a recent statewide examination of Alabama's secondary programs for students with disabilities. The study (Brown, Browning, & Dunn, 1992) addressed an array of important areas for secondary special education programs, including (a) Curriculum and Instruction, (b) Vocational Preparation (c) Vocational Education, (d) Independent Living, (e) Transition, (f) Interagency Participation, (g) Program Improvement, and (h) Post School Considerations. The purpose of this paper is to briefly highlight "select" results pertaining to two of the eight areas examined: **vocational preparation** and **interagency cooperation**. Additional results related to these and the other areas investigated are available in the document referred to in the footnote below.

The results are based on a stratified random sample of secondary special education coordinators and secondary special education teachers serving the state's city and county schools across its 12 educational regions. Specifically, the data providers were 79 special education, for a questionnaire return rate of 60%, and 302 secondary special education teachers, for a return rate of 45%.

Vocational Preparation

The importance of the vocational preparation of high school students with disabilities cannot be over emphasized. Consider, for example, that since the onset of OSERS' 1984 policy paper on transition, all the definitions of transition can be similarly characterized by one of their primary outcome goals--postsecondary employment. In addition to the definitions that are intended to guide practices, however, actual statistics can dramatically speak to the urgency of the concern. Full-time employment of transition students is said to be less than 35% (Rusch, Chadsney-Rusch, & Szymanski, 1992).

> ***Nearly a third of the teachers reported that they needed "instructional improvement" in vocational preparation . .***

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[1] The select findings reported in this paper are included in the following 101 page document containing over 37 tables and adjoining graphs: Brown, C., Browning, & Dunn, C. (1992). ***Secondary special education programs in Alabama: A statewide study***. Auburn, AL: Program for Training and Development, Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education, College of Education, Auburn University (available for $6.00 at this address or call (205) 844-5500).

There is much evidence in Alabama to support the viewpoint that vocational preparation is considered a critical component of secondary programs for its students with disabilities (Browning, Whetstone, & Boswell, 1992). In 1989, for example, the Division of Rehabilitation Services developed a *Job Readiness Curriculum* that is now being taught in many high schools throughout the state. In 1992, a group of 26 persons from around the state were assembled to identify the most pressing transition needs in Alabama. The consensus was that two of the five most critical needs were (a) "to improve and increase communication, cooperation, and commitment from and to employers on transition issues, including student abilities and employer and co-worker orientation" and, (b) "to increase in school and community job opportunities and linkages for all students with disabilities." Further evidence of the state's commitment to confronting the problem are the mini-grants now being awarded to schools by the state's Division of Special Education. Specifically, in 1992, school sites received state funded transition mini-grants totalling $105,000 per year for the purpose of encouraging LEAs to develop school and community-based work instruction as one option within the transition curriculum.

In spite of these and other recent strategies to improve upon the schools' vocational curricula and programs, however, the findings from this study suggest that there remains a serious need for the state to continue to address and significantly improve the area of vocational preparation. The select results presented below provides the reader with a "glimpse" into some of the vocationally-related areas for needed consideration, as reported by the state's special education teachers and coordinators.

- Over 50% of 275 special education teachers reported that vocational preparation for their students was provided by someone other than them.

- Nearly a third of the teachers reported that they needed "instructional improvement" in vocational preparation. Also, in three related items: (a) 110 teachers reported that they needed improvement in their "knowledge of specific requirements for various community work settings;" (b) 91 teachers selected from seven choices the option of "in-service training in work experience", as one of three most important ways for improving their classroom instruction; and (c) the coordinators ranked as first from 10 choices the option of "technical assistance to establish/increase community-based work experience", as one of three most important ways for improving their special education programs.

> ***Over 75% of the teachers said that they did not instruct their students in either in-school worksites or community worksites.***

- Over 75% of the teachers said that they did not instruct their students either in "in-school worksites" or "community worksites". In a related item: (a) only 8% of the teachers reported that their students participated in "special education community-based work experience," (b) only 16% of the teachers reported that their students participated in "special education in-school work experience", and (c) 30% of the teachers reported that their special students participated in "regular education community-based work experience."

- With regard to who coordinates work experience, 282 (96%) of the special education teachers reported that "zero" percentage of their teaching time was assigned to this role. According to them, the most responsible person(s) for coordinating work experience was as follows:

  28% reported the vocational education teacher
  22% reported the special education and vocational education teacher
  15% reported "no one"
  12% reported the work experience coordinator
  10% reported the special education teacher
  7% reported the special education teacher and work experience coordinator
  6% reported "other"

Again, Alabama clearly considers the importance of vocational preparation as a major curricula component of secondary programs for its youth with disabilities. In spite of the many steps the state has taken to improve upon the schools' vocational preparation curricula and programs, however, the findings from this study suggest that there remains a strong need to continue to employ strategies to improve upon the vocational preparation of secondary students with disabilities.

Interagency Participation

Interagency cooperation and planning are a critical systems change area that must be addressed in regard to transition planning. The fact that both federal and state statutes mandate interagency collaboration that will enable service agencies to determine the effectiveness of transition-related programs/services is evidence of its importance.

Alabama has both acknowledged the importance of establishing interagency agreements and cooperative practices at the state level and has acted accordingly (Browning, Whetstone, & Boswell, 1992). As early as 1984, for example, the official beginning of the state's cooperative interagency transition efforts began with the signing of the "Agreement of Cooperation" between the Divisions of Rehabilitation, Special Education, and Vocational Education. One year later, the first "formal" cooperative agreements with local schools were developed by the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Within two years, the agency had signed interagency agreements with all 129 local school systems. Since that time and through 1991, vocational rehabilitation has increased its transition caseload by 49% percent. A more recent expression of the importance of interagency collaboration was in 1992, when a group of 26 persons from around the state was assembled to identify the most pressing transition needs in Alabama. The consensus was that one of the five most critical needs was "To increase and improve the cooperation and coordination between state agencies including cooperative efforts with students at earlier grades and effective coordination of agency record keeping systems."

In spite of the state's acknowledged importance of interagency agreements and the steps it has taken to establish and implement cooperative efforts between agencies, and despite accomplishments the state can proudly claim, the select results presented below provide the reader with a "glimpse" into some of the interagency areas for needed consideration, as reported by the state's special education teachers and coordinators.

- The special education coordinators were asked if their students received services from other agencies and, if so, which ones. Of the 73 (95%) coordinators who answered "yes",

72% reported Adult Rehabilitation Services
38% reported Mental Health/Mental Retardation
17% reported Association for Retarded Citizens
16% reported "other" (e.g., United Cerebral Palsy)
13% reported Another LEA
8% reported Adult and Family Services
0% reported Community College

- The coordinators reported that the two most common types interagency agreements between LEAs and community agencies were (a) an "informal agreement" with vocational education (55%), and (b) an "informal agreement" with vocational rehabilitation (54%). Also, while only 5% of the coordinators said that they had no agreements, by contrast, 34% of the teachers reported that their district did not have cooperative arrangements with community agencies.

- Over 79% of the coordinators reported that it was either "important" or "very important" that their system (LEA) assume the responsibility for coordinating transitional services. Nevertheless, half of them said that they were either "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with their system's arrangements for assisting their students in transition from school-to-adult life. In several related items: (a) over 50% of the coordinators reported that they were the most responsible person for coordinating transition planning; whereas, 18% of them said that the teacher was most the responsible person; and, by contrast, (b) of the 196 teachers who said that their district had transition-related arrangements with community agencies, they reported that the most responsible person for establishing/maintaining those arrangements was:

24% reported "other" (e.g., special education coordinator, counselor)
24% reported the teacher
22% reported the work experience coordinator
13% reported the vocational education teacher
9% reported the parent
8% reported the IEP team designee

- The coordinators ranked as third from 10 choices the option of "technical assistance to establish transition agreements with community agencies", as one of three most important ways for improving their special education programs. In a related item, 233 (77%) of the teachers reported that the following two competencies were either "important" or "very important": (a) the ability to coordinate programming between school and community settings, and (b) a knowledge of eligibility requirements and program mandates of adult service agencies. Furthermore, 117 (39%) teachers said that they needed improvement in the first of these two competencies (see above) and, 134 (45%) of the teachers reported that they needed "improvement" in the second competency.

In spite of the state's acknowledged importance of interagency agreements and the steps it has taken to establish and implement cooperative efforts between agencies, the results of this study suggest a need for these past interagency agreements to be reviewed, as well as periodically evaluated at the local level in terms of their implementation.

Recommendations

Several suggestions are proposed as initial steps to continue the improvement of vocational preparation for Alabama's secondary students with disabilities. Also, four guidelines are offered for consideration when reviewing the state's current interagency agreements and practices.

Vocational Preparation

1. There are a number of very advanced vocational secondary programs in the state, such as in Dothan (Spraybarry, Holmes, Sasser, and Stringer, 1992), Gardendale (Parker, 1992), and Jefferson County (Lavender, 1992). These and other exemplary programs could be used as demonstration sites, developed as a training laboratories, and marketed for learning to other special education teachers and coordinators throughout the state.

2. In addition to select demonstration sites serving as training laboratories, it is suggested that state personnel increase their in-service training agenda to address many of the needed areas of vocational improvement suggested by the teachers. Also, the 12 full-time state level staff assigned to the State's educational regions are in a position to respond to the areas of vocational technical assistance that the coordinators and teachers reported as specific needs.

3. The state is to be commended for its incentive mini-grant program for local LEAs to establish work experience programs and opportunities for its students. This program should not only be continued but significantly expanded, if at all possible. Furthermore, these work-experience activities must be community-based. Dr. William Halloran, Program Coordinator for Secondary and Transition Programs, U.S. Department of Education has designated **curricular reform** as one of five major transition issues of the 1990s and underscored "community-based instruction" as an essential part of that reform (Halloran, 1992). Related to this point is another survey finding in which only 7% of the teachers reported that they used community-based instruction.

4. The state should develop a "partnership" with business/industry program. In a recently prepared transition grant for national competition, the Divisions of Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation identified the following as one of five major goals for systems change: **"To improve and expand the availability, access, and quality of employment services and opportunities for students with disabilities by systematically creating 'partnerships' between business/industry and education, and improved linkages with public job resources."** Clearly, new and innovative program strategies such as these not only have the potential for affecting vocational preparation practices, but also for increasing the opportunities through cooperative efforts for post secondary employment.

5. Finally, an important strategy for potential improvement in vocational preparation resides with interagency agreements and cooperation (see section below). Strengthened linkages with vocational education and vocational rehabilitation, for example, can only serve to improve the vocational preparation of the students while they are in school, as well as their post-employment opportunities once they have exited.

As one of three most important ways for improving their special education programs, the [special education] coordinators ranked third from the 10 choices the option of "technical assistance to establish transition agreements with community agencies".

Interagency Linkages

1. A coherent and consistent policy framework for interagency action is said to be required at all levels. Such a framework includes policy goals, understanding of service eligibility and entitlement requirements, commonly shared language and information among service delivery systems, and consensus on the type and scope of services provided within each level of the services delivery system (Johnson, Bruininks, & Thurlow, 1987).

2. The administrative reviewers of interagency agreements should take into account the fact that there are a number of obstacles to efficient interagency cooperation and planning. Included among potential obstacles are (a) inconsistent organizational patterns across agencies, (b) discontinuity in the geographic areas covered by programs, (c) differing application procedures for service eligibility, and (d) varying planning cycles and fiscal years (Edgar, Horton, & Maddox, 1984).

3. An "Interagency Plan" needs to be based upon valid and tested planning/ organizational models and effective management practices (Johnson, Bruinicks, & Thurlow, 1987). A number of transition interagency models have been tested and are now available for review and consideration (Bates, Bronkema, Ames, & Hess, 1992).

4. Finally, once the "Interagency Policy" plan and its related agreements have been developed, refined, and/or renewed, all personnel who participate in the transition process should become fully informed through direct training and via materials about the plan's guidelines and procedures for improved cooperative and coordinated services for secondary students with disabilities.

Summary

In summary, the results reported in this paper pertaining to the areas of vocational preparation and interagency agreement and cooperation are from a recently completed statewide examination on Alabama's secondary programs for students with disabilities. It is hoped that these and other related findings reported elsewhere will serve as a major source for determining the state's unique needs and problems regarding the transition of its youth with disabilities.

These findings provide a decision-making base for improving transition planning and programming through policy development, refinement and implementation at both the state and local level. The authors have taken the initiative to propose several approaches for addressing these problems. Of course, these suggestions only a few of many such potential programmatic strategies for improving the system.

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IDEAs and Transition: Questions and Answers

Mabrey Whetstone [1]

This module was developed to help teachers, administrators, agency personnel, and others address and meet the needs of students as they transition to adult life, as well as the requirements for IEPs under the new Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Public Law 101-476, or IDEA, requires statements of transition needs in the IEP including interagency responsibilities. The module, in addition to explaining how to complete the IEP, gives examples of transition goals and objectives, as well as examples of transition statements for IEPs.

The module was adopted from documents (Transition Planning: Statement of Needs, Goals, and Objectives and Writing Goals and Objectives) developed by Missouri LINC, University of Missouri-Columbia. The Alabama State Department of Education greatly appreciates the willingness of Missouri LINC to share their ideas and materials.

> ***This module was developed to help teachers, administrators, agency personnel, and others address and meet the needs of students as they transition... in addition to explaining how to complete the IEP, [the module] gives examples of transition goals and objectives, as well as examples of transition statements for IEPs.***

At times, one may find some of the aspects of the process presented in this manual to be more time-consuming than in the past. As you know, "change is never easy." However, once past the initial hurdles inherent with any "change," and the process becomes practice, the value and relevancy in the resulting IEPs and IEP meetings will be invaluable in ensuring that students effectively transition to adult life.

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[1] This module was developed by staff of the Division of Special Education, Alabama State Department of Education. It has been used on a number of occasions to train personnel about IDEAs in relation to transition, especially with respect to the IEP. Please contact Mabrey Whetstone if you have any inquiries about this educational module and how it might be used in training.

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Overview

Public Law 101-476, *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), mandates transition services for students with disabilities. This piece of federal legislation, passed in 1990 to amend P.L. 94-142, defines transition services as:

> *a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.*

Section 602(a)(20) further specifies that the IEP shall include:

> *a statement of the needed transition services for students beginning no later than age 16 and annually thereafter (and, when determined appropriate for the individual, beginning at age 14 or younger), including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting:* and
>
> *In the case where a participating agency, other than the educational agency, fails to provide agreed upon services, the educational agency shall reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives.*

Terminology

- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**: A written plan for the provision of special education and related services for a student with disabilities. The plan is approved for a specified time not to exceed one calendar year.
- **Adult Outcomes**: The kind of lifestyle which is desired for and by a student when that student reaches adulthood. It includes such areas as living arrangements, employment options, community participation, and other aspects of adult life.
- **Transition Goals and Objectives**: Statements and activities that identify the services needed to achieve the adult outcomes which have been targeted by the IEP team. The person(s)/agency(ies) responsible and target date for initiation and date when completed should also be identified.
- **Functional Curriculum**: A curriculum in which students learn skills which are frequently demanded in natural environments.

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. What does this law really mean?

Transition-planning has been identified as a need for students with disabilities since 1984 when Madeleine Will first proposed the model of transition from school to work (Will, 1984). The new legislation only mandates what many school systems have been moving toward; that is, the creation of programs and services which enable students to make a smooth transition from school to adult roles.

The legislation makes it clear that transition planning is a "coordinated set of activities," which implies both planning and the coordination of services within the school and with other entities outside the school. These other entities are defined in the law: "postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated and supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living and community participation." Transition services cannot be provided by the local education agency (LEA) alone. It takes interagency cooperation and coordination, as well as involvement of students, parents, and community members.

The law reemphasizes the individualized nature of planning. Services needed should be based upon individual "preferences and interests," ***not currently available programs or services***. This wording encourages the development of new, restructured service delivery models.

Emphasis on an "outcome-oriented process requires the IEP committee to look beyond annual goals and objectives and identify **long-range** goals. The educational activities that take place should ensure that students receive preparation for the identified adult roles they will be assuming after leaving school. This may involve the creation of needed services and support systems for adults with disabilities in the community.

P.L. 101-476 requires the transition needs are addressed by age 16; however, also recognized is that a longer planning time may be necessary for some students "beginning at age 14 or younger."

Q2. Who should attend in IEP meeting that addresses transition services?

The most important members of the IEP committee are the student and the parents. Both are critical in developing IEPs for transition services because they are primary stakeholders in what does or does not happen as a result of what is determined through the IEP. Additionally, the IEP committee must include an LEA representative and the student's special education teacher. The committee should also include a vocational education representative (if the student is being considered for placement and annually thereafter if placed in a vocational education program) and a representative from Vocational

To prepare for life, we need to know what the student can do in real-life situations. This type of assessment is most accurately obtained by conducting an ecological assessment, or as IDEA puts it, "a functional vocational evaluation."

Rehabilitation Services (if the student is an eligible rehabilitation client). To ensure the opportunity for participation, the LEA shall provide written notice of the annual IEP meeting to a representative of each participating agency providing or paying for needed transition services included in the student's IEP (e.g., Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Department of Human Resources, etc.).

Important Note: Past practices have shown that if the meetings can be scheduled and grouped around service agency representatives (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor) there is greater likelihood for their participation and active involvement. For instance, all students who are clients of Vocational Rehabilitation would be scheduled on one or two days, if possible, as opposed to one every day for the next 15 school days. It would appear to be professional courtesy as well as education's recognition of demands on these people that go beyond the school doors. This is not to say that they should not attend, only that demands for their time and job be considered, if possible. The local school system must coordinate IEP meetings at the secondary level to ensure opportunity for agency participation.

Q3. How are transition services documented in the IEP?

As stated earlier, federal legislation (Public Law 101-476) now mandates that transition services be stated in the IEP. A sample of the first three pages of the Alabama IEP form that reflect transition services can be found on pages 21-23.

Transition Goal

After introducing all IEP meeting participants, the special education teacher should generate a discussion of desired postschool outcomes. This is an opportunity for all members of the group to verbalize what they want for the student's postschool life. A transition goal, a broad statement of the student's anticipated postschool outcomes, must be agreed upon and documented on the student's IEP. The transition goal must identify both potential employment and community living outcomes which shall include, but not be limited to:

Employment Outcomes

- Enrollment in postsecondary education or vocational training;
- Competitive employment with no need for support;
- Competitive employment with time-limited support;
- Supported employment with infrequent support;
- Supported employment with daily support;
- Sheltered workshop;
- Day activity/training center.

Community Living Outcomes

- With parents or relatives;
- Independent living with no need for support;
- Independent living with time-limited support;
- Semiindependent living with ongoing, infrequent support;
- Semiindependent living with frequent support but less than full time;
- Group home with full-time support;
- 24-hour supervision (residential care/nursing home).

Statement of Needed Transition Services

Based on the student's individual interests and needs, the IEP committee next discusses each of the following adult role areas (and any other that are appropriate) to determine if the student is in need of specialized transition services and/or support:

Vocational Evaluation
Employment Development
Financial Management
Personal Management
Living Arrangements
Advocacy/Guardianship
Community Participation
Transportation
Medical
Other

As the IEP committee addresses each adult role area, student needs may become apparent. As needs are identified in any area, discussion should center on how to meet those needs. Priority areas should then be established by the IEP committee and marked (X) on the student's IEP form. For each area marked on the IEP (indicating that in that area there is a need for specialized transition services and/or support during the proposed IEP year), long-range goals and objectives must be written on the transition plan page of the IEP.

Transition Plan Page of the IEP

The IEP committee is to complete the student's name and the school year for the proposed IEP. For *transition area*, write in the priority adult role area(s) identified on page 2 of the IEP requiring specialized transition services. Those needs identified as priorities for the upcoming year become the *long-range goal(s)*. (**Note**: Even though you discussed each adult role area on page 2 of the IEP, it is not necessary to address each area with goals and objectives. Write goals and objectives only for those priority adult role area(s) requiring specialized transition services that you checked on page 2.)

The IEP committee then determines the skills, knowledge, and experiences to be offered and resources that must be utilized to eventually reach the long-range goal(s). The specific skills, knowledge, experiences that are necessary to achieve the long-range goal become the ***objectives***. In other words, the sequence of steps needed by the student to accomplish the goal should be outlined. For example, in the "Employment Development" transition area, the IEP committee might decide that a long-range goal for the student would be "The student will obtain supported employment." The objectives to reach this goal might be:

- The student will receive 1½ years of community-based work instruction to begin in 11th grade.
- The student will complete a comprehensive vocational assessment by ____________ (date).
- JTPA will be contacted for summer employment after the sophomore year by ________ (date).
- The student will meet with the placement counselor to obtain job leads by ______ (date).
- The student will complete applications for realistic employment by __________ (date).
- During the second semester of the student's senior year, the student will receive 16 weeks of on-the-job training through Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Parents and student will tour a supported employment service provider agency by _________ date.

Example 2: In the "Financial Management" transition area, the team might decide that for an 18-year-old student with mental disabilities a long-range goal would be "The student will manage her income with minimal assistance." However, she needs skills in developing and maintaining a budget. Additionally, she needs to apply for SSI and determine if she would be eligible for food stamps, all of these are activities in preparation for living on her own. The student may also need to complete financial aid forms to attend a postsecondary vocational school. All of these activities could be written as short-term objectives. Additional transition objective examples can be found on pages 24-28.

After writing the objectives, a ***person or agency*** is ***identified as being primarily responsible*** for each objective. Because transition services are a shared responsibility, the responsibility for providing and implementing services is a shared effort. Dependent upon the objective, either school personnel, service providers, parents, or the student might be identified as responsible. It is important to include the student in this process as much as possible. By giving students the responsibility to accomplish specific short-term objectives, they are learning to empower themselves and develop into adults who can take responsibility for their future. The persons designated as responsible for implementing goals or objectives must be committed to do so. Only when each person does his/her part will the desired adult outcomes become a reality. Section 602(a)(20) of IDEA addresses a plan if services are not provided. The law states

> ***In the case where a participating agency, other than the educational agency, fails to provide agreed-upon services, the educational agency shall reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives.***

One of the last steps in this stage of the process is to determine timelines for each objective. Indicate the ***projected initiation date*** for each objective and when accomplished, the ***date of completion***. If the objective is not accomplished during the duration of the current IEP, indicate under date of completion that the objective needs to continue on the next IEP. Whatever timeline is decided, it is important that someone be designated to follow up with whomever is identified as the responsible part for each objective on the IEP.

While this process might appear more difficult and time-consuming than traditional IEP development, the result is a document and a plan that truly addresses a student's specific needs. Results in using this process have shown that parents are pleased because their concerns about their child's future are being addressed. In sharing resources, they are given hope. Students are more motivated and involved in their education because their input and decisions are a vital part in determining a course of action for their future. Teachers become enthused because they see the value of their energy and work leading toward outcomes and results that prepare the student for adult life. Everyone involved seems to become renewed with a new sense of energy because there is a direction, a reason, and a future.

Q4. How are transition needs identified?

Transition needs are identified through an assessment process just as other needs of the student are identified. However, the types of assessment conducted may vary from the assessment methods utilized to determine classroom needs. To prepare for life, we need to know what the student can do in real-life situations. This type of assessment is most accurately obtained by conducting an ecological assessment, or as IDEA puts it, "*a functional vocational evaluation*." This assessment looks at the student in the environment to help school and home get a better idea of any pattern in the student's behavior rather than just relying on what is being observed in the classroom. All assessment data should be used to provide a picture of the student's needs and skills to determine the student's present level of performance and possible options in planning for transition.

> ***Effective programs and services depend on the collaboration of a number of professionals.***

Assessment data may be gathered from observations, student records, interviews with teachers, parents, and students, formal and informal teacher-administered tests such as the Transition Behavior Scales (McCarney, 1989), work samples, checklists, discussions, and written assignments. Results of prevocational and formal vocational assessments should also assist in determining transition needs.

Students and parents are extremely important in providing key data to determine the student's needs in each of the nine adult role areas addressed on page 96 of this document.

Q5. How do I obtain prevocational and vocational evaluation information?

It is the responsibility of the special educator to gather prevocational/vocational assessment information. Effective programs and services depend on the collaboration of a number of professionals. Depending on the specific school system, a number of professionals may participate in the assessment process at some level. These may include special education teachers, guidance counselors, vocational educators, vocational evaluators, rehabilitation professionals, school psychologists, social workers, and employers.

> ***In many rural areas there are limited services. For this reason, early planning is essential.***

Areas assessed through a vocational assessment may include:

Interests: Personal occupational or vocational preferences and dislikes, personal goals and interests, leisure time activities.

Cognitive skills: Basic reading and math, concept formation, and problem-solving ability.

Perceptual, sensory, and motor skills: Spatial discrimination, size discrimination, dexterity, coordination, strength, mobility, range of motion, visual acuity, auditory acuity.

Learning preferences and styles: Receptive and expressive -- auditory, visual, hands-on.

Vocational skills and aptitudes: Use of tools, materials and equipment, general potential for work, ability to remember instructions, capability to plan and organize, ability to improve with practice, manual dexterity, eye-hand coordination, physical strength, perceptual abilities, and physical attributes.

Career awareness and maturity: Awareness, knowledge of jobs, job requirements and rewards, aptitudes, strengths and weaknesses.

Functional/life skills: Personal and independent living skills, use of transportation, decision-making, financial management ability.

Behavior: Worker characteristics and habits, job-seeking skills, job-keeping skills including the student's level of desire to work.

Social adjustment: Home/family, relationships with peers and teachers.
(Adapted from Closer Look, 1981)

Remember, all assessment data give information about the student's present level of performance and his/her current needs. Transition planning requires that we look at this information with a view toward future goals and adult roles of the student..

Q6. I'm not sure I understand all of the areas on the IEP under the Statement of Needed Transition Services. What do they encompass?

Below are some examples of possible activities and agencies for help in each adult role area. These examples might help get discussion started during an IEP meeting.

Vocational Evaluation

- Interest and Aptitude
- Worker Behavior
- Work Sample Assessment
- Situational Assessment

Employment Development

- Career Counseling/Career Awareness
- Personal Awareness (strengths and limitations)
- Community-based Education and Training
- Job Shadowing
- Job Interview Training
- Work-related Social Skills
- On-the-job Training (VR, ARC, JTPA)
- Work-study Programs
- Competitive Employment
- Supported Work
- Volunteer Work
- Day Activity Centers
- Postsecondary Training
  - Community Colleges
  - Vocational Technical Centers
  - Rehabilitation Facilities
  - Adult Basic Education

Financial Management

- Money Management
- Budgeting
- Earned Income
- Unearned Income (gifts/dividends)
- Insurance (life, medical, disability, dental, car)
- General Public Assistance
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Social Security Benefits
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Department of Mental Health

Personal Management

- Domestic Skills
  - Meal Preparation
  - Laundry
  - Cleaning
- Household Management
- Hygiene Skills
- Safety
- Parenting Skills
- Personal Counseling
- Fitness/Wellness

Living Arrangements

- With Family
- Adult Foster Care
- Shelter Care/Group Home
- Semi-independent Living (supervised)
- Shared Living (roommate)
- Independent Living (own house/apartment)

Advocacy/Guardianship

- Self-advocacy Training
- Searching Out Information (apartment hunting, etc.)
- Seeking Medical or Other Assistance
- Stating Needs
- Expressing Strengths and Weaknesses
- Guardianship
- Wills/Trusts
- Conservatorship

Community Participation

- Community Skills
  - Government Agencies
  - Utilities
  - Taxes
  - Drivers License/Sales Tax/Car Buying
  - Banking
- Local Businesses -
  - Grocery Shopping/Clothes/ Restaurants/Theaters/Apartment Hunting/Leases/etc.
- Comparison Shopping
- Voting
- Library
- Volunteer Work

Community Participation (concluded)

- Social Skills
  - Conversation
  - Greetings
  - Telephone
  - Handling Criticism
  - Friends/Socialization
  - Support Group
  - Churches
  - Work Relationships
- Recreation/Leisure
  - Social Activities
  - Community Programs
  - Parks and Recreation Programs
  - Church Groups
  - Hobby/Clubs

Transportation

- Mobility Training
- Independent Transportation (own car, bicycle, car-pooling, walking, etc.)
- Public Transportation (bus, taxi, train)
- Specialized Transportation (wheelchair, van)
- Specialized Equipment (electronic wheelchair)

Medical

- Medical Care: Intermittent Care, Daily Care (long-term)
- Medical Services: General Medical Services (checkups, etc.)
- Dental Care
- Medical/Accident/Dental Insurance
- Financial Resources (group policy, individual policy, Medicaid, other)

(Adapted from: Idaho Individual Transition Plan, no date)

Q7. What is the difference between transition goals and objectives and other goals and objectives that may go into the IEP?

There are two major differences between transition goals and objectives and other goals and objectives written for the IEP. The first is the difference between short-range and long-range goals. The second is that transition planning sometimes requires only *statements* made in the IEP, not necessarily full-fledged goals and objectives.

Short-range and Long-range Goals

Let's assume there is a 16-year-old student with mild mental retardation. This student will be a junior next year. The IEP team has discussed interests and preferences and obtained a vocational evaluation for the student. There are written goals and objectives in the last IEP for basic skills (reading, math, and communication), some goals/objectives for social skills improvement, and perhaps some for employability skills (grooming, punctuality, responding to criticism, etc.). These transitional goals and objectives could certainly be said to "be preparing the student for adult roles." However, nowhere in the IEP are those adult rules identified so one could see a connection between educational activities and adult roles. Therefore, it is critical to define the "transition goal" or "dream" for postschool life.

This IEP would need to also address the long-range goals of the student. Parents, students, administrators, teachers, and other participants will need to be prepared at the IEP meeting to discuss postschool goals and the support services that might be needed to reach the transition goals. As the team addresses each transition adult role area (vocational evaluation, employment development, etc.), student needs should become apparent. As needs are identified in any area, discussion should center on how to meet the needs. In some cases, this discussion will result in the writing of goals and objectives that directly relate to the transition of the student. For example, if the student wants to work after leaving school but isn't sure of the kind of work, an intensive career exploration focus on the IEP would produce goals and objectives to enable the student to explore various options. This may include community-based instruction, job shadowing, a work-study program, a vocational evaluation (if one has not been done and the determination of who is responsible for each activity. If adult agencies, such as Adult Rehabilitation Services, are involved in the IEP meeting, they will have suggestions for placement and may need to determine eligibility for services.

If the student is fairly certain about his/her job goal and vocational training is needed, the team will determine if a community-based training site is needed, how the student will be taught the job, when training should begin, etc. Perhaps attending the closest vocational school might be appropriate. Goals and objectives on the IEP would be written in this case also if the vocational class is modified or special.

Prior planning is needed to ensure that the appropriate representatives attend the IEP meeting. In the above case, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and a representative from Vocational Education should be present since either might be needed to help determine the best method of achieving the goals of the student.

Since this student is 16, there is little time left in school to prepare for adult roles. In this case, specific goals and objectives for transition are likely to appear in the IEP rather than statements of transition needs.

Transition Statements

The second difference between the traditional goals and objectives and transition planning is that sometimes it may not be necessary to write complete goals and objectives into the IEP for the current year. (At some point prior to exiting school, goals and objectives will probably be written for the adult outcome areas addressed.)

Let's assume that a student is in the 7th grade (age 14 and has multiple and/or severe disabilities. The new legislation allows for transition planning to begin younger than 16, when appropriate. This student will need a variety of services upon exiting school, and coordinating those services while the student is still in middle school/junior high is very important. Knowing the student and reviewing the areas of the adult role dimensions, it becomes evident that the student will need ongoing support in many areas. Planning for the IEP meeting would involve talking to the student and the parents about inviting a variety of people to the meeting. It may be that the student or parents want to concentrate on just a few areas initially. They may need to know more about Society Security (Financial Management), group homes (Living Arrangements) and leisure activities (Community Participation), since these might be useful even at the present. You would then invite (or obtain information from) a representative from a Social Security office, a group home consortium (contact your closest MR/DD council) and someone from city parks and recreation, Special Olympics or a university therapeutic recreation department.

The meeting would be held and goals and objectives might be appropriate in some of these areas. Let's say, though, that the group home representative just gave information and that there was little to actually do regarding the student's postschool living arrangements at this point. A statement on the IEP regarding the need for living arrangements after exiting school would act as a reminder to review this need at a later date. The date and contact person should be included in the statement. Something like the following would suffice:

> ***Marshall Young, from Living Continuums, Unlimited, related information on eligibility and regulations, but stated that nothing should be done until the student was within four years of graduation. At that time, if (student) still plans to enter a group home, plans can be made for obtaining eligibility for the program and to ensure a space at the appropriate time.***

This statement should serve as a reminder to the teacher who is working with the student during the freshman year of high school to recontact the group home representative.

If the adult outcomes checklist is reviewed each year and brief statements are made regarding necessary transition needs, information will not "get lost" when teachers or students move about the school system. A services referral checklist might be devised to include possible service(s) needed, date(s) for contact, person(s) responsible, and the actual completion date of the action.

Q8. How do I know I have written a good objective?

There are three components to an objective which may assist educators when writing understandable and measurable objectives. A well-written objective should: a) describe the **conditions** which will exist when the behavior is to be taught and evaluated, b) describe the specific **behavior** the student is expected to perform in both measurable and observable terms, and c) describe the **criteria** of acceptable performance by which the outcome will be measured (Noie & Bradley, 1985).

The three components are identified in the example below:

condition:	while working in the school cafeteria during lunch
behavior:	the student will work continuously with no interruptions
criteria:	for forty minutes for ten consecutive days

Probably the best way to determine if an objective is well-written is to read it and see if it is understandable and makes sense.

Q9. How early should transition goals and objectives be included in the IEP?

P.L. 101-476, IDEA, states the IEP must address needed transition services no later than age 16 and, when appropriate, should begin at age 14. It is important, however, to include goals and objectives that begin to prepare students for adult life as early as possible.

Q10.What are some examples of transition skills and activities that should be addressed at the elementary and junior high/middle school level?

Elementary Level

At the elementary level, students can become aware of various jobs and be introduced to the employability skills necessary for success on the job. Examples of transition skills to address in the IEP for elementary students might be:

- grooming and personal hygiene skills
- problem-solving and decision-making skills
- social skills
- job experiences within the school
- consumer skills
- career awareness/employment development

At the elementary level, the goal of employment development is to emphasize career awareness in areas such as daily living, personal/social and occupational guidance and preparation (Brolin, 1989). Attitudes, information and self-understanding are the primary elements of career awareness that should be emphasized during the elementary school years. With this in mind, the IEP committee must be careful to write objectives that describe awareness, information, and self-understanding in measurable and observable items. For example, it is impossible to observe and measure this objective:

> *The student will understand what clothes to wear for the weather.*

A better way to write this objective might be:

> *After instruction of appropriate selection of clothing based on weather, the student will dress appropriately for the weather for five consecutive days as charted on a weekly log.*

Other examples of objectives that use observable and measurable terms to describe instruction in career awareness include:

- After instruction using a variety of learning activities, the student will list 5 physical characteristics they possess with 100% accuracy.

- Through research on various jobs, the student will list the major job duties for three jobs with 100% accuracy.

Junior High/Middle School Level

The skills learned in elementary school can be built upon at the junior high level. Junior high school is a critical time for students to more thoroughly explore their interests and abilities and determine how these can be directed toward successful adult roles. Including transition goals in the IEP during junior high builds a foundation for more specific transition plans to be made for a course of study in high school. Examples of transition activities that might be included in the IEP are:

- banking and money management
- career exploration
- job shadowing of workers in the community
- home management skills
- social skills on the worksite
- food, nutrition, preparation, and clean up
- public transportation use

During the junior high school years, career exploration must be emphasized. It is during this phase of career development that students begin closer examination of various aspects of their abilities and interests, the world of work, life styles and the personal/social skills necessary for adult life. Through a variety of instructional experiences, junior high students can become better prepared to plan future career preparation activities.

Some examples include:

- After observing five different jobs in the community, the student will list three skills needed to perform each job with 100% accuracy.
- Will the use of an identification card, the student will independently complete sample job application forms for five different jobs.
- While at the community laundromat, the student will independently wash, dry, and fold one load of laundry with 100% accuracy for ten consecutive trips to the laundromat.
- At each community vocational training site (four different sites per year), the student will independently perform each task with 90% accuracy for five consecutive sessions each.

Q11. What are some examples of objectives for students in vocational training programs at the secondary level?

Regardless of the vocational options available to students at the secondary level, it is critical to write goals and objectives based on the *individual* needs of students. For example, if a student needs to receive ongoing supervision while on the job training site, objectives such as this might be written:

> During a sixty-minute work period, the student will appropriately manipulate work materials with no unnecessary talking for six out of six spot checks during 10 consecutive sessions (Noie & Bradley, 1985).
>
> After supervised mobility training, the student will independently ride the city bus to and from the work site for five consecutive days.

For a student who is involved in the cooperative school-work program, objectives reflecting the student's needs should be written. Two examples might be:

> Based on weekly evaluations from the employer, the student will receive "good" marks on 95% of the items on the checklist for 10 consecutive weeks.
>
> Using a calculator, the student will independently balance his checking account record each month for five consecutive months.

Q12. Parents need to be very involved in the transition planning. How do I increase parent involvement?

Many parents willingly become involved in this planning, especially if IEP meetings contain "futures planning" (Mount & Zwernik, 1988) at the elementary level. Parents need support also. When they see teachers concerned about and concentrating on the *abilities* of their children and what the children *can do* rather than what they cannot do, they begin to see their role as valued and will become active members of the team. Parents will be able to play a more active role if they have been supported to do so from the time their child entered special education services. With the emphasis on family involvement in early childhood programs, maintaining the family's involvement K-12 may be easier to do. It may be more difficult to begin to expect this from parents "automatically" when their child turns 16. Just as it will take teachers some time to reorient themselves to a "futures" planning perspective, so, too, it will take parents some time; all the more reason to begin this framework at an early age. To assist parents in this process, teachers might ask parents of all students to complete one of the Parent/Guardian Transition Questionnaires (available from Mabrey Whetstone).

Q13. What if there are no services to meet the student's needs in my community?

In many rural areas there are limited services. For this reason, early planning is essential. When looking at a young student with projected needs, community planning can begin in order to develop the services needed. Transition planning can be a tool for system change, but adult agencies and community leaders must be involved in making those changes. The evolution of needed services might even provide increased economic development for the community. For example, transportation needs might be met by the initiation of a privately-owned taxi/bus service. The *1990 Americans with Disabilities Act* requires that public transportation be available for persons with disabilities, so communities planning for transition needs of students will also be complying with other federal laws; at the same time, they will improve the economic base and the quality of life in their communities. Regional local transition teams might be established to develop recommendations and strategies to provide services. Remember, the LEA cannot provide all of the services necessary for students to transition into adult roles. Collaboration with other agencies is absolutely essential and should result in benefits to the entire community.

> ***IEP goals and objectives are the plans for education based on student needs. Goals and objectives included in the IEP should be addressed and assessed annually.***

Q14. What if a goal or objective is not accomplished?

IEP goals and objectives are the plans for education based on student needs. Goals and objectives included in the IEP should be addressed and assessed annually. No one, however, can assure that each objective will be accomplished. Teacher, parents, students, counselors, resource and agency personnel may be responsible for goals and objectives and should attempt to enable them to be met. *"In the case where a participating agency, other than the educational agency, fails to provide agreed-upon services, the educational agency shall reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives."* However, no one is considered liable for assuring that all areas will be accomplished to the degree planned for the IEP.

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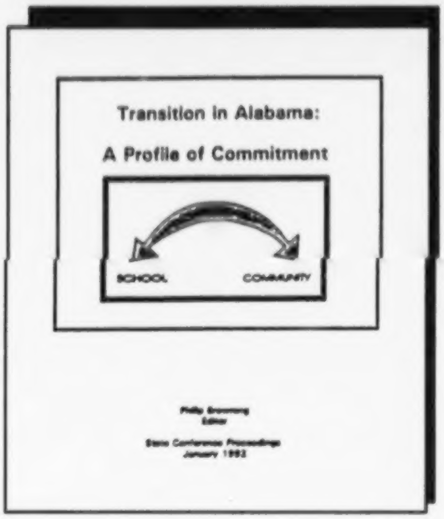
This monograph presents the proceedings (and more) from the First Annual Statewide Conference on Transition in Alabama. A reviewer in the Transition in Alabama Newsletter said, *"Personally, I think it is the single, most thorough account available to us regarding Alabama's past, present, and future efforts in transition."*



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A Profile of Commitment

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2. Secondary Special Education Programs in Alabama: A Statewide Examination

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5. A Primer on Supported Employment

This workbook, which is designed for the new job coach, introduces the principles of supported employment, including (a) common models, (b) employer relations, (c) consumer assessment, (d) job placement and training, and (e) employment maintenance. Prepared in a curriculum learning format, the Primer takes approximately two hours to read and answer the workbook questions. (39 pages, 10 references, $10.00)

6. Overview of the Federal Wage and Hour Regulations

In this videotape, Ms. Berdelle Johnson, Section 14 (c) Specialist for the southeast region of the Department of Labor, reviews the August 10, 1989 regulations for workers with disabilities who will be paid less than minimum wage. Accompanying this vidoetape is a printed text of the regulatons as published in the Federal Register.

7. Alabama's Rehabilitation Counselors who Serve Transition Clients: A Statewide Examination

The results of this study document the needs of Alabama's rehabilitation counselors who are transition specialists who have caseloads (either full or in-part) of youth with disabilities between the ages between 15-25). The findings serve as guidelines for needed areas of program development and improvement. The collective responses from 59 of 76 counselors are presented by over 70 Summary Highlight Statements on the major findings, and 49 Tables with each accompanied by a bar graph. These findings are reported in the examined areas of: (a) Assessment Information, (b) IEP/IWRP Development and Implementation, (c) Client/Parent Involvement in Planning, (d) High School Curricula, (e) Vocational Preparation, (f) Coordination of Services, and (g) Rehabilitation Outcome. (49 tables and adjoining graphs, $6.00)

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